



Cornell University
Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924097313179>

CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



3 1924 097 313 179

In compliance with current
copyright law, Cornell University
Library produced this
replacement volume on paper
that meets the ANSI Standard
Z39.48-1992 to replace the
irreparably deteriorated original.

2003

Cornell University Library

Gift of the Estate of
PROFESSOR HARRY CAPLAN '16

THE HISTORY
OF RASSELAS

PRINCE OF ABYSSINIA

By SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

By LESLIE STEPHEN

"Happiness is like the mirage in the desert; she tantalises us with a delusion that distance creates and that contiguity destroys."

A. L. BURT COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
52-58 DUANE STREET, NEW YORK

CONTENTS.

| | PAGES |
|---|-------|
| LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON BY LESLIE STEPHEN..... | 5 |
| Childhood and Early Life..... | 5 |
| Literary Career..... | 22 |
| Johnson and His Friends..... | 65 |
| The Closing Years of Johnson's Life..... | 113 |
| Johnson's Writings..... | 141 |
| HISTORY OF RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABYSSINIA..... | 175 |

LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born in Lichfield in 1709. His father, Michael Johnson, was a bookseller, highly respected by the cathedral clergy, and for a time sufficiently prosperous to be a magistrate of the town, and, in the year of his son's birth, sheriff of the county. He opened a bookstall on market-days at neighboring towns, including Birmingham, which was as yet unable to maintain a separate bookseller. The tradesman often exaggerates the prejudices of the class whose wants he supplies, and Michael Johnson was probably a more devoted High Churchman and Tory than many of the cathedral clergy themselves. He reconciled himself with difficulty to taking the oaths against the exiled dynasty. He was a man of considerable mental and physical power, but tormented by hypochondriacal tendencies. His son inherited a share both of his constitution and of his principles. Long afterwards Samuel associated with his childish days a faint but solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds and long black hood.

The lady was Queen Anne, to whom, in compliance with a superstition just dying a natural death, he had been taken by his mother to be touched for the king's evil. The touch was ineffectual. Perhaps, as Boswell suggested, he ought to have been presented to the genuine heirs of the Stuarts in Rome. Disease and superstition had thus stood by his cradle, and they never quitted him during life. The demon of hypochondria was always lying in wait for him, and could be exorcised for a time only by hard work or social excitement. Of this we shall hear enough; but it may be as well to sum up at once some of the physical characteristics which marked him through life and greatly influenced his career.

The disease had scarred and disfigured features otherwise regular and always impressive. It had seriously injured his eyes, entirely destroying, it seems, the sight of one. He could not, it is said, distinguish a friend's face half a yard off, and pictures were to him meaningless patches, in which he could never see the resemblance to their objects. The statement is perhaps exaggerated; for he could see enough to condemn a portrait of himself. He expressed some annoyance when Reynolds had painted him with a pen held close to his eye; and protested that he would not be handed down to posterity as "blinking Sam." It seems that habits of minute attention atoned in some degree for this natural defect. Boswell tells us how Johnson once corrected him as to the precise shape of a mountain; and Mrs. Thrale says that he was a close and

exacting critic of ladies' dress, even to the accidental position of a ribbon. He could even lay down æsthetical canons upon such matters. He reproved her for wearing a dark dress as unsuitable to a "little creature." "What," he asked, "have not all insects gay colors?" His insensibility to music was even more pronounced than his dulness of sight. On hearing it said, in praise of a musical performance, that it was in any case difficult, his feeling comment was, "I wish it had been impossible!"

The queer convulsions by which he amazed all beholders were probably connected with his disease, though he and Reynolds ascribed them simply to habit. When entering a doorway with his blind companion, Miss Williams, he would suddenly desert her on the step in order to "whirl and twist about" in strange gesticulations. The performance partook of the nature of a superstitious ceremonial. He would stop in a street or the middle of a room to go through it correctly. Once he collected a laughing mob in Twickenham meadows by his antics; his hands imitating the motions of a jockey riding at full speed and his feet twisting in and out to make heels and toes touch alternately. He presently sat down and took out a *Grotius De Veritate*, over which he "seesawed" so violently that the mob ran back to see what was the matter. Once in such a fit he suddenly twisted off the shoe of a lady who sat by him. Sometimes he seemed to be obeying some hidden impulse, which commanded him to touch every post in a street or tread on the centre of every

paving-stone, and would return if his task had not been accurately performed.

In spite of such oddities, he was not only possessed of physical power corresponding to his great height and massive stature, but was something of a proficient at athletic exercises. He was conversant with the theory, at least, of boxing; a knowledge probably acquired from an uncle who kept the ring at Smithfield for a year, and was never beaten in boxing or wrestling. His constitutional fearlessness would have made him a formidable antagonist. Hawkins describes the oak staff, six feet in length and increasing from one to three inches in diameter, which lay ready to his hand when he expected an attack from Macpherson of Ossian celebrity. Once he is said to have taken up a chair at the theatre upon which a man had seated himself during his temporary absence, and to have tossed it and its occupant bodily into the pit. He would swim into pools said to be dangerous, beat huge dogs into peace, climb trees, and even run races and jump gates. Once at least he went out foxhunting, and though he despised the amusement, was deeply touched by the complimentary assertion that he rode as well as the most illiterate fellow in England. Perhaps the most whimsical of his performances was when, in his fifty-fifth year, he went to the top of a high hill with his friend Langton. "I have not had a roll for a long time," said the great lexicographer suddenly, and, after deliberately emptying his pockets, he laid himself parallel to the edge of the hill, and descended, turning over and

over till he came to the bottom. We may believe, as Mrs. Thrale remarks upon his jumping over a stool to show that he was not tired by his hunting, that his performances in this kind were so strange and uncouth that a fear for the safety of his bones quenched the spectator's tendency to laugh.

In such a strange case was imprisoned one of the most vigorous intellects of the time. Vast strength hampered by clumsiness and associated with grievous disease, deep and massive powers of feeling limited by narrow though acute perceptions, were characteristic both of soul and body. These peculiarities were manifested from his early infancy. Miss Seward, a typical specimen of the provincial *précieuse*, attempted to trace them in an epitaph which he was said to have written at the age of three.

Here lies good master duck
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on ;
If it had lived, it had been good luck,
For then we had had an odd one.

The verses, however, were really made by his father, who passed them off as the child's, and illustrate nothing but the paternal vanity. In fact the boy was regarded as something of an infant prodigy. His great powers of memory, characteristic of a mind singularly retentive of all impressions, were early developed. He seemed to learn by intuition. Indolence, as in his after life, alternated with brief efforts of strenuous exertion. His want of sight prevented him from sharing in the ordinary childish

sports ; and one of his great pleasures was in reading old romances—a taste which he retained through life. Boys of this temperament are generally despised by their fellows ; but Johnson seems to have had the power of enforcing the respect of his companions. Three of the lads used to come for him in the morning and carry him in triumph to school, seated upon the shoulders of one and supported on each side by his companions.

After learning to read at a dame-school, and from a certain Tom Brown, of whom it is only recorded that he published a spelling-book and dedicated it to the Universe, young Samuel was sent to the Lichfield Grammar School, and was afterwards, for a short time, apparently in the character of pupil-teacher, at the school of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire. A good deal of Latin was “whipped into him,” and though he complained of the excessive severity of two of his teachers, he was always a believer in the virtues of the rod. A child, he said, who is flogged, “gets his task, and there’s an end on’t ; whereas by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundations of lasting mischief ; you make brothers and sisters hate each other.” In practice, indeed, this stern disciplinarian seems to have been specially indulgent to children. The memory of his own sorrows made him value their happiness, and he rejoiced greatly when he at last persuaded a school-master to remit the old-fashioned holiday-task.

Johnson left school at sixteen and spent two years at home, probably in learning his father’s business.

This seems to have been the chief period of his studies. Long afterwards he said that he knew almost as much at eighteen as he did at the age of fifty-three—the date of the remark. His father's shop would give him many opportunities, and he devoured what came in his way with the indiscriminating eagerness of a young student. His intellectual resembled his physical appetite. He gorged books. He tore the hearts out of them, but did not study systematically. Do you read books through? he asked indignantly of some one who expected from him such supererogatory labor. His memory enabled him to accumulate great stores of a desultory and unsystematic knowledge. Somehow he became a fine Latin scholar, though never first-rate as a Grecian. The direction of his studies was partly determined by the discovery of a folio of Petrarch, lying on a shelf where he was looking for apples; and one of his earliest literary plans, never carried out, was an edition of Politian, with a history of Latin poetry from the time of Petrarch. When he went to the University at the end of this period, he was in possession of a very unusual amount of reading.

Meanwhile he was beginning to feel the pressure of poverty. His father's affairs were probably getting into disorder. One anecdote—it is one which it is difficult to read without emotion—refers to this period. Many years afterwards, Johnson, worn by disease and the hard struggle of life, was staying at Lichfield, where a few old friends still survived, but in which every street must have revived the memories

of the many who had long since gone over to the majority. He was missed one morning at breakfast, and did not return till supper-time. Then he told how his time had been passed. On that day fifty years before, his father, confined by illness, had begged him to take his place to sell books at a stall at Uttoxeter. Pride made him refuse. "To do away with the sin of this disobedience, I this day went in a post-chaise to Uttoxeter, and going into the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head and stood with it bare an hour before the stall which my father had formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather; a penance by which I trust I have propitiated Heaven for this only instance, I believe, of contumacy to my father." If the anecdote illustrates the touch of superstition in Johnson's mind, it reveals too that sacred depth of tenderness which ennobled his character. No repentance can ever wipe out the past or make it be as though it had not been; but the remorse of a fine character may be transmuted into a permanent source of nobler views of life and the world.

There are difficulties in determining the circumstances and duration of Johnson's stay at Oxford. He began residence at Pembroke College in 1728. It seems probable that he received some assistance from a gentleman whose son took him as companion, and from the clergy of Lichfield, to whom his father was known, and who were aware of the son's talents. Possibly his college assisted him during part of the

time. It is certain that he left without taking a degree, though he probably resided for nearly three years. It is certain, also, that his father's bankruptcy made his stay difficult, and that the period must have been one of trial.

The effect of the Oxford residence upon Johnson's mind was characteristic. The lad already suffered from the attacks of melancholy, which sometimes drove him to the borders of insanity. At Oxford, Laws's *Serious Call* gave him the strong religious impressions which remained through life. But he does not seem to have been regarded as a gloomy or a religious youth by his contemporaries. When told in after years that he had been described as a "gay and frolicsome fellow," he replied, "Ah! sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority." Though a hearty supporter of authority in principle, Johnson was distinguished through life by the strongest spirit of personal independence and self-respect. He held, too, the sound doctrine, deplored by his respectable biographer Hawkins, that the scholar's life, like the Christian's, levelled all distinctions of rank. When an officious benefactor put a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation. He seems to have treated his tutors with a contempt which Boswell politely attributed to "great fortitude of mind," but Johnson himself set down as "stark insensibility." The life of a poor student is not, one

may fear, even yet exempt from much bitterness, and in those days the position was far more servile than at present. The servitors and sizars had much to bear from richer companions. A proud melancholy lad, conscious of great powers, had to meet with hard rebuffs, and tried to meet them by returning scorn for scorn.

Such distresses, however, did not shake Johnson's rooted Toryism. He fully imbibed, if he did not already share, the strongest prejudices of the place, and his misery never produced a revolt against the system, though it may have fostered insolence to individuals. Three of the most eminent men with whom Johnson came in contact in later life, had also been students at Oxford. Wesley, his senior by six years, was a fellow of Lincoln whilst Johnson was an undergraduate, and was learning at Oxford the necessity of rousing his countrymen from the religious lethargy into which they had sunk. "Have not pride and haughtiness of spirit, impatience, and peevishness, sloth and indolence, gluttony and sensuality, and even a proverbial uselessness been objected to us, perhaps not always by our enemies nor wholly without ground?" So said Wesley, preaching before the University of Oxford in 1744, and the words in his mouth imply more than the preacher's formality. Adam Smith, Johnson's junior by fourteen years, was so impressed by the utter indifference of Oxford authorities to their duties, as to find in it an admirable illustration of the consequences of the neglect of the true principles of supply and demand

implied in the endowment of learning. Gibbon, his junior by twenty-eight years, passed at Oxford the "most idle and unprofitable" months of his whole life; and was, he said, as willing to disclaim the university for a mother, as she could be to renounce him for a son. Oxford, as judged by these men, was remarkable as an illustration of the spiritual and intellectual decadence of a body which at other times has been a centre of great movements of thought. Johnson, though he had a rougher experience than any of the three, loved Oxford as though she had not been a harsh stepmother to his youth. Sir, he said fondly of his college, "we are a nest of singing-birds." Most of the strains are now pretty well forgotten, and some of them must at all times have been such as we scarcely associate with the nightingale. Johnson, however, cherished his college friendships, delighted in paying visits to his old university, and was deeply touched by the academical honors by which Oxford long afterwards recognized an eminence scarcely fostered by its protection. Far from sharing the doctrines of Adam Smith, he only regretted that the universities were not richer, and expressed a desire which will be understood by advocates of the "endowment of research," that there were many places of a thousand a year at Oxford.

On leaving the University, in 1731, the world was all before him. His father died in the end of the year, and Johnson's whole immediate inheritance was twenty pounds. Where was he to turn for daily bread? Even in those days, most gates were barred

with gold and opened but to golden keys. The greatest chance for a poor man was probably through the Church. The career of Warburton, who rose from a similar position to a bishopric might have been rivalled by Johnson, and his connections with Lichfield might, one would suppose, have helped him to a start. It would be easy to speculate upon causes which might have hindered such a career. In later life, he more than once refused to take orders upon the promise of a living. Johnson, as we know him, was a man of the world; though a religious man of the world. He represents the secular rather than the ecclesiastical type. So far as his mode of teaching goes, he is rather a disciple of Socrates than of St. Paul or Wesley. According to him, a "tavern-chair" was "the throne of human felicity," and supplied a better arena than the pulpit for the utterance of his message to mankind. And, though his external circumstances doubtless determined his method, there was much in his character which made it congenial. Johnson's religious emotions were such as to make habitual reserve almost a sanitary necessity. They were deeply colored by his constitutional melancholy. Fears of death and hell were prominent in his personal creed. To trade upon his feelings like a charlatan would have been abhorrent to his masculine character; and to give them full and frequent utterance like a genuine teacher of mankind would have been to imperil his sanity. If he had gone through the excitement of a Methodist conversion, he would probably have ended his days in a madhouse.

Such considerations, however, were not, one may guess, distinctly present to Johnson himself; and the offer of a college fellowship or of private patronage might probably have altered his career. He might have become a learned recluse or a struggling Parson Adams. College fellowships were less open to talent then than now, and patrons were never too propitious to the uncouth giant, who had to force his way by sheer labor, and fight for his own hand. Accordingly, the young scholar tried to coin his brains into money by the most depressing and least hopeful of employments. By becoming an usher in a school, he could at least turn his talents to account with little delay, and that was the most pressing consideration. By one schoolmaster he was rejected on the ground that his infirmities would excite the ridicule of the boys. Under another he passed some months of "complicated misery," and could never think of the school without horror and aversion. Finding this situation intolerable, he settled in Birmingham, in 1733, to be near an old schoolfellow, named Hector, who was apparently beginning to practise as a surgeon. Johnson seems to have had some acquaintances among the comfortable families in the neighborhood; but his means of living are obscure. Some small literary work came in his way. He contributed essays to a local paper, and translated a book of *Travels in Abyssinia*. For this, his first publication, he received five guineas. In 1734 he made certain overtures to Cave, a London publisher, of the result of which I shall have to speak presently. For the

present it is pretty clear that the great problem of self-support had been very inadequately solved.

Having no money and no prospects, Johnson naturally married. The attractions of the lady were not very manifest to others than her husband. She was the widow of a Birmingham mercer named Porter. Her age at the time (1735) of the second marriage was forty-six, the bridegroom being not quite twenty-six. The biographer's eye was not fixed upon Johnson till after his wife's death, and we have little in the way of authentic description of her person and character. Garrick, who had known her, said that she was very fat, with cheeks colored both by paint and cordials, flimsy and fantastic in dress and affected in her manners. She is said to have treated her husband with some contempt, adopting the airs of an antiquated beauty, which he returned by elaborate deference. Garrick used his wonderful powers of mimicry to make fun of the uncouth caresses of the husband, and the courtly Beauclerc used to provoke the smiles of his audience by repeating Johnson's assertion that "it was a love-match on both sides." One incident of the wedding-day was ominous. As the newly-married couple rode back from church, Mrs. Johnson showed her spirit by reproaching her husband for riding too fast, and then for lagging behind. Resolved "not to be made the slave of caprice," he pushed on briskly till he was fairly out of sight. When she rejoined him, as he, of course, took care that she should soon do, she was in tears. Mrs. Johnson apparently knew how to regain supremacy,

but, at any rate, Johnson loved her devotedly during life, and clung to her memory during a widowhood of more than thirty years, as fondly as if they had been the most pattern hero and heroine of romantic fiction.

Whatever Mrs. Johnson's charms, she seems to have been a woman of good sense and some literary judgment. Johnson's grotesque appearance did not prevent her from saying to her daughter on their first introduction, "This is the most sensible man I ever met." Her praises were, we may believe, sweeter to him than those of the severest critics, or the most fervent of personal flatterers. Like all good men, Johnson loved good women, and liked to have on hand a flirtation or two, as warm as might be within the bounds of due decorum. But nothing affected his fidelity to his Tetty or displaced her image in his mind. He remembered her in many solemn prayers, and such words as "this was dear Tetty's book:" or, "this was a prayer which dear Tetty was accustomed to say," were found written by him in many of her books of devotion.

Mrs. Johnson had one other recommendation—a fortune, namely, of £800—little enough, even then, as a provision for the support of the married pair, but enough to help Johnson to make a fresh start. In 1736, there appeared an advertisement in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages by Samuel Johnson." If, as seems probable, Mrs. Johnson's

money supplied the funds for this venture, it was an unlucky speculation.

Johnson was not fitted to be a pedagogue. Success in that profession implies skill in the management of pupils, but perhaps still more decidedly in the management of parents. Johnson had little qualifications in either way. As a teacher he would probably have been alternately despotic and over-indulgent; and, on the other hand, a single glance at the rough Dominie Sampson would be enough to frighten the ordinary parent off his premises. Very few pupils came, and they seem to have profited little, if a story as told of two of his pupils refers to this time. After some months of instruction in English history, he asked them who had destroyed the monasteries? One of them gave no answer; the other replied "Jesus Christ." Johnson, however, could boast of one eminent pupil in David Garrick, though, by Garrick's account, his master was of little service except as affording an excellent mark for his early powers of ridicule. The school, or "academy," failed after a year and a half; and Johnson, once more at a loss for employment, resolved to try the great experiment, made so often and so often unsuccessfully. He left Lichfield to seek his fortune in London. Garrick accompanied him, and the two brought a common letter of introduction to the master of an academy from Gilbert Walmsley, registrar of the Prerogative Court in Lichfield. Long afterwards Johnson took an opportunity in the *Lives of the Poets*, of expressing his warm regard for the

memory of his early friend, to whom he had been recommended by a community of literary tastes, in spite of party differences and great inequality of age. Walmsley says in his letter, that "one Johnson" is about to accompany Garrick to London, in order to try his fate with a tragedy and get himself employed in translation. Johnson, he adds, "is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy writer."

The letter is dated March 2d, 1737. Before recording what is known of his early career thus started, it will be well to take a glance at the general condition of the profession of Literature in England at this period.

CHAPTER II.

LITERARY CAREER.

"No man but a blockhead," said Johnson, "ever wrote except for money." The doctrine is, of course, perfectly outrageous, and specially calculated to shock people who like to keep it for their private use, instead of proclaiming it in public. But it is a good expression of that huge contempt for the foppery of high-flown sentiment which, as is not uncommon with Johnson, passes into something which would be cynical if it were not half-humorous. In this case it implies also the contempt of the professional for the amateur. Johnson despised gentlemen who dabbled in his craft, as a man whose life is devoted to music or painting despises the ladies and gentlemen who treat those arts as fashionable accomplishments. An author was, according to him, a man who turned out books as a bricklayer turns out houses or a tailor coats. So long as he supplied a good article and got a fair price, he was a fool to grumble, and a humbug to affect loftier motives.

Johnson was not the first professional author, in this sense, but perhaps the first man who made the profession respectable. The principal habitat of authors, in his age, was Grub Street—a region which, in later years, has ceased to be ashamed of itself,

and has adopted the more pretentious name Bohemia. The original Grub Street, it is said, first became associated with authorship during the increase of pamphlet literature, produced by the civil wars. Fox, the martyrologist, was one of its original inhabitants. Another of its heroes was a certain Mr. Welby, of whom the sole record is, that he "lived there forty years without being seen of any." In fact, it was a region of holes and corners, calculated to illustrate that great advantage of London life, which a friend of Boswell's described by saying, that a man could there be always "close to his burrow." The "burrow" which received the luckless wight, was indeed no pleasant refuge. Since poor Green, in the earliest generation of dramatists, bought his "groat'sworth of wit with a million of repentance," too many of his brethren had trodden the path which led to hopeless misery or death in a tavern brawl. The history of men who had to support themselves by their pens, is a record of almost universal gloom. The names of Spenser, of Butler, and of Otway, are enough to remind us that even warm contemporary recognition was not enough to raise an author above the fear of dying in want of necessities. The two great dictators of literature, Ben Jonson in the earlier and Dryden in the later part of the century, only kept their heads above water by help of the laureate's pittance, though reckless imprudence, encouraged by the precarious life, was the cause of much of their sufferings. Patronage gave but a fitful resource, and the author could hope at most

but an occasional crust, flung to him from better provided tables.

In the happy days of Queen Anne, it is true, there had been a gleam of prosperity. Many authors, Addison, Congreve, Swift, and others of less name, had won by their pens not only temporary profits but permanent places. The class which came into power at the Revolution was willing for a time, to share some of the public patronage with men distinguished for intellectual eminence. Patronage was liberal when the funds came out of other men's pockets. But, as the system of party government developed, it soon became evident that this involved a waste of power. There were enough political partisans to absorb all the comfortable sinecures to be had; and such money as was still spent upon literature, was given in return for services equally degrading to giver and receiver. Nor did the patronage of literature reach the poor inhabitants of Grub Street. Addison's poetical power might suggest or justify the gift of a place from his elegant friends; but a man like De Foe, who really looked to his pen for great part of his daily subsistence, was below the region of such prizes, and was obliged in later years not only to write inferior books for money, but to sell himself and act as a spy upon his fellows. One great man, it is true, made an independence by literature. Pope received some £8000 for his translation of Homer, by the then popular mode of subscription—a kind of compromise between the systems of patronage and public support. But his success

caused little pleasure in Grub Street. No love was lost between the poet and the dwellers in this dismal region. Pope was its deadliest enemy, and carried on an internecine warfare with its inmates, which has enriched our language with a great satire, but which wasted his powers upon low objects, and tempted him into disgraceful artifices. The life of the unfortunate victims, pilloried in the *Dunciad* and accused of the unpardonable sins of poverty and dependence, was too often one which might have extorted sympathy even from a thin-skinned poet and critic.

Illustrations of the manners and customs of that Grub Street of which Johnson was to become an inmate are only too abundant. The best writers of the day could tell of hardships endured in that dismal region. Richardson went on the sound principle of keeping his shop that his shop might keep him. But the other great novelists of the century have painted from life the miseries of an author's existence. Fielding, Smollett, and Goldsmith have described the poor wretches with a vivid force which gives sadness to the reflection that each of those great men was drawing upon his own experience, and that they each died in distress. The *Case of Authors by Profession* to quote the title of a pamphlet by Ralph, was indeed a wretched one, when the greatest of their number had an incessant struggle to keep the wolf from the door. The life of an author resembled the proverbial existence of the flying-fish, chased by enemies in sea and in air; he only escaped from the slavery of the bookseller's garret, to fly from the

bailiff or rot in the debtor's ward or the spunging-house. Many strange half-pathetic and half ludicrous anecdotes survive to recall the sorrows and the recklessness of the luckless scribblers who, like one of Johnson's acquaintance, "lived in London and hung loose upon society."

There was Samuel Boyse, for example, whose poem on the *Deity* is quoted with high praise by Fielding. Once Johnson had generously exerted himself for his comrade in misery, and collected enough money by sixpences to get the poet's clothes out of pawn. Two days afterwards, Boyse had spent the money and was found in bed, covered only with a blanket, through two holes in which he passed his arms to write. Boyse, it appears, when still in this position would lay out his last half-guinea to buy truffles and mushrooms for his last scrap of beef. Of another scribbler Johnson said, "I honor Derrick for his strength of mind. One night when Floyd (another poor author) was wandering about the streets at night, he found Derrick fast asleep upon a bulk. Upon being suddenly awaked, Derrick started up; 'My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you go home with me to my lodgings?'" Authors in such circumstances might be forced into such a wonderful contract as that which is reported to have been drawn up by one Gardner with Rolt and Christopher Smart. They were to write a monthly miscellany, sold at sixpence, and to have a third of the profits; but they were to write nothing else, and the contract was to last for ninety-

nine years. Johnson himself summed up the trade upon earth by the lines in which Virgil describes the entrance to hell ; thus translated by Dryden :—

Just in the gate and in the jaws of hell,
Revengeful cares and sullen sorrows dwell.
And pale diseases and repining age,
Want, fear, and famine's unresisted rage :
Here toils and Death and Death's half brother, Sleep—
Forms, terrible to view, their sentry keep.

“Now,” said Johnson, “almost all these apply exactly to an author ; these are the concomitants of a printing-house.”

Judicious authors, indeed, were learning how to make literature pay. Some of them belonged to the class who understood the great truth that the scissors are a very superior implement to the pen considered as a tool of literary trade. Such, for example, was that respectable Dr. John Campbell, whose parties Johnson ceased to frequent lest Scotchmen should say of any good bits of work, “Ay, ay, he has learnt this of Cawmell.” Campbell, he said quaintly, was a good man, a pious man. “I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years ; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat. This shows he has good principles,”—of which in fact there seems to be some less questionable evidence. Campbell supported himself by writings chiefly of the Encyclopedia or Gazetteer kind ; and became, still in Johnson's phrase, “the richest author that ever grazed the common of literature.” A more singular and

less reputable character was that impudent quack, Sir John Hill, who, with his insolent attacks upon the Royal Society, pretentious botanical and medical compilations, plays, novels, and magazine articles, has long sunk into utter oblivion. It is said of him that he pursued every branch of literary quackery with greater contempt of character than any man of his time, and that he made as much as £1500 in a year;—three times as much, it is added, as any one writer ever made in the same period.

The political scribblers—the Arnalls, Gordons, Trenchards, Guthries, Ralphs, and Amhersts, whose names meet us in the notes to the *Dunciad* and in contemporary pamphlets and newspapers—form another variety of the class. Their general character may be estimated from Johnson's classification of the "Scribbler for a Party" with the "Commissioner of Excise," as the "two lowest of all human beings." "Ralph," says one of the notes to the *Dunciad*, "ended in the common sink of all such writers, a political newspaper." The prejudice against such employment has scarcely died out in our own day, and may be still traced in the account of Pendennis and his friend Warrington. People who do dirty work must be paid for it; and the Secret Committee which inquired into Walpole's administration reported that in ten years, from 1731 to 1741, a sum of £50,077 18s. had been paid to writers and printers of newspapers. Arnall, now remembered chiefly by Pope's line,—

Spirit of Arnall, aid me whilst I lie!

had received, in four years, £10,997 6s. 8d. of this amount. The more successful writers might look to pensions or preferment. Francis, for example, the translator of Horace, and the father, in all probability, of the most formidable of the whole tribe of such literary gladiators, received, it is said, 900*l.* a year for his work, besides being appointed to a rectory and the chaplaincy of Chelsea.

It must, moreover, be observed that the price of literary work was rising during the century, and that, in the latter half, considerable sums were received by successful writers. Religious as well as dramatic literature had begun to be commercially valuable. Baxter, in the previous century, made from 60*l.* to 80*l.* a year by his pen. The copyright of Tillotson's *Sermons* was sold, it is said, upon his death for £2500. Considerable sums were made by the plan of publishing by subscription. It is said that 4600 people subscribed to the two posthumous volumes of Conybeare's *Sermons*. A few poets trod in Pope's steps. Young made more than £3000 for the Satires called the *Universal Passion*, published, I think, on the same plan; and the Duke of Wharton is said, though the report is doubtful, to have given him £2000 for the same work. Gay made £1000 by his *Poems*; £400 for the copyright of the *Beggar's Opera*, and three times as much for its second part, *Polly*. Among historians, Hume seems to have received £700 a volume; Smollett made £2000 by his catchpenny rival publication; Henry made £3300 by his history; and Robertson, after the booksellers had

made £6000 by his *History of Scotland*, sold his *Charles V.* for £4500. Amongst the novelists, Fielding received £700 for *Tom Jones* and £1000 for *Amelia*; Sterne, for the second edition of the first part of *Tristram Shandy* and for two additional volumes, received £650; besides which Lord Fauconberg gave him a living (most inappropriate acknowledgment, one would say!), and Warburton a purse of gold. Goldsmith received 60 guineas for the immortal *Vicar*, a fair price, according to Johnson, for a work by a then unknown author. By each of his plays he made about £500, and for the eight volumes of his *Natural History* he received 800 guineas. Towards the end of the century, Mrs. Radcliffe got £500 for the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and £800 for her last work, the *Italian*. Perhaps the largest sum given for a single book was £6000 paid to Hawkesworth for his account of the South Sea Expeditions. Horne Tooke received from £4000 to £5000 for the *Diversions of Purley*; and it is added by his biographer, though it seems to be incredible, that Hayley received no less than £11,000 for the *Life of Cowper*. This was, of course, in the present century, when we are already approaching the period of Scott and Byron.

Such sums prove that some few authors might achieve independence by a successful work; and it is well to remember them in considering Johnson's life from the business point of view. Though he never grumbled at the booksellers, and on the contrary, was always ready to defend them as liberal men, he cer-

tainly failed, whether from carelessness or want of skill, to turn them to as much profit as many less celebrated rivals. Meanwhile, pecuniary success of this kind was beyond any reasonable hopes. A man who has to work like his own dependent Levett, and to make the "modest toil of every day" supply "the wants of every day," must discount his talents until he can secure leisure for some more sustained effort. Johnson, coming up from the country to seek for work, could have but a slender prospect of rising above the ordinary level of his Grub Street companions and rivals. One publisher to whom he applied suggested to him that it would be his wisest course to buy a porter's knot and carry trunks; and, in the struggle which followed, Johnson must sometimes have been tempted to regret that the advice was not taken.

The details of the ordeal through which he was now to pass have naturally vanished. Johnson, long afterwards, burst into tears on recalling the trials of this period. But, at the time, no one was interested in noting the history of an obscure literary drudge, and it has not been described by the sufferer himself. What we know is derived from a few letters and incidental references of Johnson in later days. On first arriving in London he was almost destitute, and had to join with Garrick in raising a loan of five pounds, which, we are glad to say, was repaid. He dined for eightpence at an ordinary: a cut of meat for sixpence, bread for a penny, and a penny to the waiter, making out the charge. One of his acquaintance

had told him that a man might live in London for thirty pounds a year. Ten pounds would pay for clothes; a garret might be hired for eighteen-pence a week; if any one asked for an address, it was easy to reply, "I am to be found at such a place." Three-pence laid out at a coffee-house would enable him to pass some hours a day in good company; dinner might be had for sixpence, a bread-and-milk breakfast for a penny, and supper was superfluous. On clean shirt day you might go abroad and pay visits. This leaves a surplus of nearly one pound from the thirty.

Johnson, however, had a wife to support; and to raise funds for even so ascetic a mode of existence required steady labor. Often, it seems, his purse was at the very lowest ebb. One of his letters to his employer is signed *impransus*; and whether or not the dinnerless condition was in this case accidental, or significant of absolute impecuniosity, the less pleasant interpretation is not improbable. He would walk the streets all night with his friend, Savage, when their combined funds could not pay for a lodging. One night, as he told Sir Joshua Reynolds in later years, they thus perambulated St. James's Square, warming themselves by declaiming against Walpole, and nobly resolved that they would stand by their country.

Patriotic enthusiasm, however, as no one knew better than Johnson, is a poor substitute for bed and supper. Johnson suffered acutely and made some attempts to escape from his misery. To the end of his

life, he was grateful to those who had lent him a helping hand. "Harry Hervey," he said of one of them shortly before his death, "was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him." Pope was impressed by the excellence of his first poem, *Loudon*, and induced Lord Gower to write to a friend to beg Swift to obtain a degree for Johnson from the University of Dublin. The terms of this circuitous application, curious, as bringing into connection three of the most eminent men of letters of the day, prove that the youngest of them was at the time (1739) in deep distress. The object of the degree was to qualify Johnson for a mastership of £60 a year, which would make him happy for life. He would rather, said Lord Gower, die upon the road to Dublin if an examination were necessary, "than be starved to death in translating for booksellers, which has been his only subsistence for some time past." The application failed, however, and the want of a degree was equally fatal to another application to be admitted to practise at Doctor's Commons.

Literature was thus perforce Johnson's sole support ; and by literature was meant, for the most part, drudgery of the kind indicated by the phrase, "translating for booksellers." While still in Lichfield, Johnson had, as I have said, written to Cave, proposing to become a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The letter was one of those which a modern editor receives by the dozen, and answers as perfunctorily as his conscience will allow. It seems, how-

ever, to have made some impression upon Cave, and possibly led to Johnson's employment by him on his first arrival in London. From 1738 he was employed both on the Magazine and in some jobs of translation.

Edward Cave, to whom we are thus introduced, was a man of some mark in the history of literature. Johnson always spoke of him with affection and afterwards wrote his life in complimentary terms. Cave, though a clumsy, phlegmatic person of little cultivation, seems to have been one of those men who, whilst destitute of real critical powers, have a certain instinct for recognizing the commercial value of literary wares. He had become by this time well-known as the publisher of a magazine which survives to this day. Journals containing summaries of passing events had already been started. Boyer's *Political State of Great Britain* began in 1711. *The Historical Register*, which added to a chronicle some literary notices, was started in 1716. *The Grub Street Journal* was another journal with fuller critical notices, which first appeared in 1730; and these two seem to have been superseded by the *Gentleman's Magazine* started by Cave in the next year. Johnson saw in it an opening for the employment of his literary talents; and regarded its contributors with that awe so natural in youthful aspirants, and at once so comic and pathetic to writers of a little experience. The names of many of Cave's staff are preserved in a note to Hawkins. One or two of them, such as Birch and Akenside, have still a certain interest for students of literature; but few have heard of the great Moses Browne, who

was regarded as the great poetical light of the magazine. Johnson looked up to him as a leader in his craft, and was graciously taken by Cave to an ale-house in Clerkenwell, where, wrapped in a horseman's coat, and "a great bushy uncombed wig," he saw Mr. Browne sitting at the end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, and felt the satisfaction of a true hero-worshipper.

It is needless to describe in detail the literary task-work done by Johnson at this period, the Latin poems which he contributed in praise of Cave, and of Cave's friends, or the Jacobite squibs by which he relieved his anti-ministerialist feelings. One incident of the period doubtless refreshed the soul of many authors, who have shared Campbell's gratitude to Napoleon for the sole redeeming action of his life—the shooting of a bookseller. Johnson was employed by Osborne, a rough specimen of the trade, to make a catalogue of the Harleian Library. Osborne offensively reproved him for negligence, and Johnson knocked him down with a folio. The book with which the feat was performed (*Biblia Græca Septuaginta*, fol. 1594 Frankfort) was in existence in a bookseller's shop at Cambridge in 1812, and should surely have been placed in some safe author's museum.

The most remarkable of Johnson's performances as a hack writer deserves a brief notice. He was one of the first of reporters. Cave published such reports of the debates in Parliament as were then allowed by the jealousy of the Legislature, under the title of *The Senate of Lilliput*. Johnson was the

author of the debates from Nov. 1740 to February 1742. Persons were employed to attend in the two Houses, who brought home notes of the speeches which were then put into shape by Johnson. Long afterwards, at a dinner at Foote's, Francis (the father of Junius) mentioned a speech of Pitt's as the best he had ever read, and superior to anything in Demosthenes. Hereupon Johnson replied, "I wrote that speech in a garret in Exeter Street." When the company applauded not only his eloquence but his impartiality, Johnson replied, "That is not quite true; I saved appearances tolerably well, but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." The speeches passed for a time as accurate; though, in truth, it has been proved and it is easy to observe, that they are, in fact, very vague reflections of the original. The editors of Chesterfield's Works published two of the speeches, and, to Johnson's considerable amusement, declared that one of them resembled Demosthenes and the other Cicero. It is plain enough to the modern reader that, if so, both of the ancient orators must have written true Johnsonese; and, in fact, the style of the true author is often as plainly marked in many of these compositions as in the *Rambler* or *Rasselas*. For this deception, such as it was, Johnson expressed penitence at the end of his life, though he said that he had ceased to write when he found that they were taken as genuine. He would not be "accessory to the propagation of falsehood."

Another of Johnson's works which appeared in 1744

requires notice both for its intrinsic merit, and its autobiographical interest. The most remarkable of his Grub-Street companions was the Richard Savage already mentioned. Johnson's life of him written soon after his death, is one of his most forcible performances, and the best extant illustration of the life of the struggling authors of the time. Savage claimed to be the illegitimate son of the Countess of Macclesfield, who was divorced from her husband in the year of his birth on account of her connection with his supposed father, Lord Rivers. According to the story, believed by Johnson, and published without her contradiction in the mother's lifetime, she not only disavowed her son, but cherished an unnatural hatred for him. She told his father that he was dead, in order that he might not be benefitted by the father's will; she tried to have him kidnapped and sent to the plantations; and she did her best to prevent him from receiving a pardon when he had been sentenced to death for killing a man in a tavern brawl. However this may be, and there are reasons for doubt, the story was generally believed, and caused much sympathy for the supposed victim. Savage was at one time protected by the kindness of Steele, who published his story, and sometimes employed him as a literary assistant. When Steele became disgusted with him, he received generous help from the actor Wilks and from Mrs. Oldfield, to whom he had been introduced by some dramatic efforts. Then he was taken up by Lord Tyrconnel, but abandoned by him after a violent quarrel; he afterwards called himself

a volunteer laureate, and received a pension of 50*l.* a year from Queen Caroline; on her death he was thrown into deep distress, and helped by a subscription to which Pope was the chief contributor, on condition of retiring to the country. Ultimately he quarrelled with his last protectors, and ended by dying in a debtor's prison. Various poetical works, now utterly forgotten, obtained for him scanty profit. This career sufficiently reveals the character. Savage belonged to the very common type of men, who seem to employ their whole talents to throw away their chances in life, and to disgust everyone who offers them a helping hand. He was, however, a man of some talent, though his poems are now hopelessly unreadable, and seems to have had a singular attraction for Johnson. The biography is curiously marked by Johnson's constant effort to put the best face upon faults, which he has too much love of truth to conceal. The explanation is, partly, that Johnson conceived himself to be avenging a victim of cruel oppression. "This mother," he says, after recording her vindictiveness, "is still alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting that the life, which she often endeavored to destroy, was at last shortened by her maternal offices; that though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of embittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death."

But it is also probable that Savage had a strong influence upon Johnson's mind at a very impressible part of his career. The young man, still ignorant of life and full of reverent enthusiasm for the literary magnates of his time, was impressed by the varied experience of his companion, and, it may be, flattered by his intimacy. Savage, he says admiringly, had enjoyed great opportunities of seeing the most conspicuous men of the day in their private life. He was shrewd and inquisitive enough to use his opportunities well. "More circumstances to constitute a critic on human life could not easily concur." The only phrase which survives to justify this remark is Savage's statement about Walpole, that "the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politics, and from politics to obscenity." We may, however, guess what was the special charm of the intercourse to Johnson. Savage was an expert in that science of human nature, learnt from experience not from books, upon which Johnson set so high a value, and of which he was destined to become the authorized expositor. There were, moreover, resemblances between the two men. They were both admired and sought out for their conversational powers. Savage, indeed, seems to have lived chiefly by the people who entertained him for talk, till he had disgusted them by his insolence and his utter disregard of time and propriety. He would, like Johnson, sit up talking beyond midnight, and next day decline to rise till dinner-time, though his favorite drink was not, like Johnson's, free from intoxicating properties. Both

of them had a lofty pride, which Johnson heartily commends in Savage, though he has difficulty in palliating some of its manifestations. One of the stories reminds us of an anecdote already related of Johnson himself. Some clothes had been left for Savage at a coffeehouse by a person who, out of delicacy, concealed his name. Savage, however, resented some want of ceremony, and refused to enter the house again till the clothes had been removed.

What was honorable pride in Johnson was, indeed, simple arrogance in Savage. He asked favors, his biographer says, without submission, and resented refusal as an insult. He had too much pride to acknowledge, but not too much to receive, obligations; enough to quarrel with his charitable benefactors, but not enough to make him rise to independence of their charity. His pension would have sufficed to keep him, only that as soon as he received it he retired from the sight of all his acquaintance, and came back before long as penniless as before. This conduct, observes his biographer, was "very particular." It was hardly so singular as objectionable; and we are not surprised to be told that he was rather a "friend of goodness" than himself a good man. In short, we may say of him as Beauclerk said of a friend of Boswell's that, if he had excellent principles, he did not wear them out in practice.

There is something quaint about this picture of a thorough-paced scamp, admiringly painted by a virtuous man; forced, in spite of himself, to make it a likeness, and striving in vain to make it attractive.

But it is also pathetic when we remember that Johnson shared some part at least of his hero's miseries. "On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house, among thieves and beggars, was to be found the author of *The Wanderer*, the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose eloquence might have influenced senators, and whose delicacy might have polished courts." Very shocking, no doubt, and yet hardly surprising under the circumstances! To us it is more interesting to remember that the author of the *Rambler* was not only a sympathizer, but a fellow-sufferer with the author of the *Wanderer*, and shared the queer "lodgings" of his friend, as Floyd shared the lodgings of Derrick. Johnson happily came unscathed through the ordeal which was too much for poor Savage, and could boast with perfect truth in later life that "no man, who ever lived by literature, had lived more independently than I have done." It was in so strange a school, and under such questionable teaching that Johnson formed his conception of the world and of the conduct befitting its inmates. One characteristic conclusion is indicated in the opening passage of the life. It has always been observed, he says, that men eminent by nature or fortune are not generally happy: "whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the

misfortunes of those, whose eminence drew upon them an universal attention, have been more carefully recorded because they were more generally observed, and have in reality been only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent or more severe."

The last explanation was that which really commended itself to Johnson. Nobody had better reason to know that obscurity might conceal a misery as bitter as any that fell to the lot of the most eminent. The gloom due to his constitutional temperament was intensified by the sense that he and his wife were dependent upon the goodwill of a narrow and ignorant tradesman for the scantiest maintenance. How was he to reach some solid standing-ground above the hopeless mire of Grub Street? As a journeyman author he could make both ends meet, but only on condition of incessant labor. Illness and misfortune would mean constant dependence upon charity or bondage to creditors. To get ahead of the world it was necessary to distinguish himself in some way from the herd of needy competitors. He had come up from Lichfield with a play in his pocket, but the play did not seem at present to have much chance of emerging. Meanwhile he published a poem which did something to give him a general reputation.

London—an imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal—was published in May, 1738. The plan was doubtless suggested by Pope's imitations of Horace, which had recently appeared. Though necessarily following the lines of Juvenal's poem, and conforming to the conventional fashion of the

time, both in sentiment and versification, the poem has a biographical significance. It is indeed odd to find Johnson, who afterwards thought of London as a lover of his mistress, and who despised nothing more heartily than the cant of Rousseau and the sentimentalists, adopting in this poem the ordinary denunciations of the corruption of towns, and singing the praises of an innocent country life. Doubtless, the young writer was like other young men, taking up a strain still imitative and artificial. He has a quiet smile at Savage in the life, because in his retreat to Wales, that enthusiast declared that he "could not debar himself from the happiness which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or lose the opportunity of listening without intermission to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life." In *London*, this insincere cockney adopts Savage's view. Thales, who is generally supposed to represent Savage (and this coincidence seems to confirm the opinion), is to retire "from the dungeons of the Strand," and to end a healthy life in pruning walks and twining bowers in his garden.

There every bush with nature's music rings,
There every breeze bears health upon its wings.

Johnson had not yet learnt the value of perfect sincerity even in poetry. But it must also be admitted that London, as seen by the poor drudge from

a Grub Street garret, probably presented a prospect gloomy enough to make even Johnson long at times for rural solitude. The poem reflects, too, the ordinary talk of the heterogeneous band of patriots, Jacobites, and disappointed Whigs, who were beginning to gather enough strength to threaten Walpole's long tenure of power. Many references to contemporary politics illustrate Johnson's sympathy with the inhabitants of the contemporary Cave of Adullam.

This poem, as already stated, attracted Pope's notice, who made a curious note on a scrap of paper sent with it to a friend. Johnson is described as "a man afflicted with an infirmity of the convulsive kind, that attacks him sometimes so as to make him a sad spectacle." This seems to have been the chief information obtained by Pope about the anonymous author, of whom he had said, on first reading the poem, this man will soon be *déterré*. *London* made a certain noise ; it reached a second edition in a week, and attracted various patrons, among others, General Oglethorpe, celebrated by Pope, and through a long life the warm friend of Johnson. One line, however, in the poem printed in capital letters, gives the moral which was doubtless most deeply felt by the author, and which did not lose its meaning in the years to come. This mournful truth, he says,—

Is everywhere confess'd,
Slow rises worth by poverty depress'd.

Ten years later (in January, 1749) appeared the

Vanity of Human Wishes, an imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. The difference in tone shows how deeply this and similar truths had been impressed upon its author in the interval. Though still an imitation, it is as significant as the most original work could be of Johnson's settled views of life. It was written at a white heat, as indeed Johnson wrote all his best work. Its strong Stoical morality, its profound and melancholy illustrations of the old and ever new sentiment, *Vanias Vanitatum*, make it perhaps the most impressive poem of the kind in the language. The lines on the scholar's fate show that the iron had entered his soul in the interval. Should the scholar succeed beyond expectation in his labours and escape melancholy and disease, yet, he says,—

Yet hope not life from grief and danger free,
Nor think the doom of man reversed on thee ;
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes
And pause awhile from letters, to be wise ;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron and the jail ;
See nations, slowly wise and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, once again attend.
Hear Lydia's life and Galileo's end.

For the "patron," Johnson had originally written the "garret." The change was made after an experience of patronage to be presently described in connection with the *Dictionary*.

For *London* Johnson received ten guineas, and for the *Vanity Human Wishes* fifteen. Though indirectly valuable, as increasing his reputation, such

work was not very profitable. The most promising career in a pecuniary sense was still to be found on the stage. Novelists were not yet the rivals of dramatists, and many authors had made enough by a successful play to float them through a year or two. Johnson had probably been determined by his knowledge of this fact to write the tragedy of *Irene*. No other excuse at least can be given for the composition of one of the heaviest and most unreadable of dramatic performances, interesting now, if interesting at all, solely as a curious example of the result of bestowing great powers upon a totally uncongenial task. Young men, however, may be pardoned for such blunders if they are not repeated, and Johnson, though he seems to have retained a fondness for his unlucky performance, never indulged in playwriting after leaving Lichfield. The best thing connected with the play was Johnson's retort to his friend Walmsley, the Lichfield registrar. "How," asked Walmsley, "can you contrive to plunge your heroine into deeper calamity?" "Sir," said Johnson, "I can put her into the spiritual court." Even Boswell can only say for *Irene* that it is "entitled to the praise of superior excellence," and admits its entire absence of dramatic power. Garrick, who had become manager of Drury Lane, produced his friend's work in 1749. The play was carried through nine nights by Garrick's friendly zeal, so that the author had his three nights' profits. For this he received £195 17s. and for the copy he had £100. People probably attended, as they attend modern representations of legitimate drama, rather from a

sense of duty, than in the hope of pleasure. The heroine originally had to speak two lines with a bowstring round her neck. The situation produced cries of murder, and she had to go off the stage alive. The objectionable passage was removed, but *Irene* was on the whole a failure, and has never, I imagine, made another appearance. When asked how he felt upon his ill-success, he replied "like the monument," and indeed he made it a principle throughout life to accept the decision of the public like a sensible man without murmurs.

Meanwhile, Johnson was already embarked upon an undertaking of a very different kind. In 1747 he had put forth a plan for an English Dictionary, addressed at the suggestion of Dodsley, to Lord Chesterfield, then Secretary of State, and the great contemporary Mæcenas. Johnson had apparently been maturing the scheme for some time. "I know," he says in the "plan," that "the work in which I engaged is generally considered as drudgery for the blind, as the proper toil of artless industry, a book that requires neither the light of learning nor the activity of genius, but may be successfully performed without any higher quality than that of bearing burdens with dull patience, and beating the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution." He adds in a sub-sarcastic tone, that although princes and statesmen had once thought it honorable to patronize dictionaries, he had considered such benevolent acts to be "prodigies, recorded rather to raise wonder than expectation," and he was accordingly pleased and surprised to find

that Chesterfield took an interest in his undertaking. He proceeds to lay down the general principles upon which he intends to frame his work, in order to invite timely suggestions and repress unreasonable expectations. At this time, humble as his aspirations might be, he took a view of the possibilities open to him which had to be lowered before the publication of the dictionary. He shared the illusion that a language might be "fixed" by making a catalogue of its words. In the preface which appeared with the completed work, he explains very sensibly the vanity of any such expectation. Whilst all human affairs are changing, it is, as he says, absurd to imagine that the language which repeats all human thoughts and feelings can remain unaltered.

A dictionary, as Johnson conceived it, was in fact work for a "harmless drudge," the definition of a lexicographer given in the book itself. Etymology in a scientific sense was as yet non-existent, and Johnson was not in this respect ahead of his contemporaries. To collect all the words in the language, to define their meanings as accurately as might be, to give the obvious or whimsical guesses at Etymology suggested by previous writers, and to append a good collection of illustrative passages was the sum of his ambition. Any systematic tracing of the historical processes by which a particular language had been developed was unknown, and of course the result could not be anticipated. The work, indeed, required a keen logical faculty of definition, and wide reading of the English literature of the two preceding centu-

ries ; but it could of course give no play either for the higher literary faculties or faculties of scientific investigation. A dictionary in Johnson's sense was the highest kind of work to which a literary journeyman could be set, but it was still work for a journeyman, not for an artist. He was not adding to literature, but providing a useful implement for future men of letters.

Johnson had thus got on hand the biggest job that could be well undertaken by a good workman in his humble craft. He was to receive fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds for the whole, and he expected to finish it in three years. The money, it is to be observed, was to satisfy not only Johnson but several copyists employed in the mechanical part of the work. It was advanced by instalments, and came to an end before the conclusion of the book. Indeed, it appeared when accounts were settled, that he had received a hundred pounds more than was due. He could, however, pay his way for the time, and would gain a reputation enough to ensure work in future. The period of extreme poverty had probably ended when Johnson got permanent employment on the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He was not elevated above the need of drudgery and economy, but he might at least be free from the dread of neglect. He could command his market—such as it was. The necessity of steady labour was probably useful in repelling his fits of melancholy. His name was beginning to be known, and men of reputation were seeking his acquaintance. In the winter of 1749 he formed a

club, which met weekly at a "famous beef-steak house" in Ivy Lane. Among its members were Hawkins, afterwards his biographer, and two friends, Bathurst a physician, and Hawkesworth an author, for the first of whom he entertained an unusually strong affection. The Club, like its more famous successor, gave Johnson an opportunity of displaying and improving his great conversational powers. He was already dreaded for his prowess in argument, his dictatorial manners and vivid flashes of wit and humor, the more effective from the habitual gloom and apparent heaviness of the discourser.

The talk of this society probably suggested topics for the *Rambler*, which appeared at this time, and caused Johnson's fame to spread further beyond the literary circles of London. The wit and humor have, indeed, left few traces upon its ponderous pages, for the *Rambler* marks the culminating period of Johnson's worst qualities of style. The pompous and involved language seems indeed to be a fit clothing for the melancholy reflections which are its chief staple, and in spite of its unmistakable power it is as heavy reading as the heavy class of lay-sermonizing to which it belongs. Such literature, however, is often strangely popular in England, and the *Rambler* though its circulation was limited, gave to Johnson his position as a great practical moralist. He took his literary title, one may say, from the *Rambler*, as the more familiar title was derived from the *Dictionary*.

The *Rambler* was published twice a week from March

20th, 1750, to March 17th, 1752. In five numbers alone he received assistance from friends, and one of these, written by Richardson, is said to have been the only number which had a large sale. The circulation rarely exceeded 500, though ten English editions were published in the author's lifetime, besides Scotch and Irish editions. The payment, however, namely, two guineas a number, must have been welcome to Johnson, and the friendship of many distinguished men of the time was a still more valuable reward. A quaint story illustrates the hero-worship of which Johnson now became the object. Dr. Burney, afterwards an intimate friend, had introduced himself to Johnson by letter in consequence of the *Rambler*, and the plan of the *Dictionary*. The admiration was shared by a friend of Burney's, a Mr. Bewley, known—in Norfolk at least—as the “philosopher of Massingham.” When Burney at last gained the honor of a personal interview, he wished to procure some “relic” of Johnson for his friend. He cut off some bristles from a hearth-broom in the doctor's chambers, and sent them in a letter to his fellow-enthusiast. Long afterwards Johnson was pleased to hear of this simple-minded homage, and not only sent a copy of the *Lives of the Poets* to the rural philosopher, but deigned to grant him a personal interview.

Dearer than any such praise was the approval of Johnson's wife. She told him that, well as she had thought of him before, she had not considered him equal to such a performance. The voice that so

charmed him was soon to be silenced for ever. Mrs. Johnson died (March 17th, 1752) three days after the appearance of the last *Rambler*. The man who has passed through such a trial knows well that, whatever may be in store for him in the dark future, fate can have no heavier blow in reserve. Though Johnson once acknowledged to Boswell, when in a placid humor, that happier days had come to him in his old age than in his early life, he would probably have added that though fame and friendship and freedom from the harrowing cares of poverty might cause his life to be more equably happy, yet their rewards could represent but a faint and mocking reflection of the best moments of a happy marriage. His strong mind and tender nature reeled under the blow. Here is one pathetic little note written to the friend, Dr. Taylor, who had come to him in his distress. That which first announced the calamity, and which, said Taylor, "expressed grief in the strongest manner he had ever read," is lost.

"Dear Sir,—Let me have your company and instruction. Do not live away from me. My distress is great.

"Pray desire Mrs. Taylor to inform me what mourning I should buy for my mother and Miss Porter, and bring a note in writing with you.

"Remember me in your prayers, for vain is the help of man.

"I am, dear sir,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

We need not regret that a veil is drawn over the details of the bitter agony of his passage through the valley of the shadow of death. It is enough to put down the words which he wrote long afterwards when visibly approaching the close of all human emotions and interests:—

“This is the day on which, in 1752, dear Tetty died. I have now uttered a prayer of repentance and contrition; perhaps Tetty knows that I prayed for her. Perhaps Tetty is now praying for me. God help me. Thou, God, art merciful, hear my prayers and enable me to trust in Thee.

“We were married almost seventeen years, and have now been parted thirty.”

It seems half profane, even at this distance of time, to pry into grief so deep and so lasting. Johnson turned for relief to that which all sufferers know to be the only remedy for sorrow—hard labor. He set to work in his garret, an inconvenient room, “because,” he said, “in that room only I never saw Mrs. Johnson.” He helped his friend Hawkesworth in the *Adventurer*, a new periodical of the *Rambler* kind; but his main work was the *Dictionary*, which came out at last in 1755. Its appearance was the occasion of an explosion of wrath which marks an epoch in our literature. Johnson, as we have seen, had dedicated the Plan to Lord Chesterfield; and his language implies that they had been to some extent in personal communication. Chesterfield’s fame is in curious antithesis to Johnson’s. He was a man of great abilities, and seems to have deserved high

credit for some parts of his statesmanship. As a Viceroy in Ireland in particular he showed qualities rare in his generation. To Johnson he was known as the nobleman who had a wide social influence as an acknowledged *abiter elegantiarum*, and who reckoned among his claims some of that literary polish in which the earlier generation of nobles had certainly been superior to their successors. The art of life expounded in his *Letters* differs from Johnson's as much as the elegant diplomatist differs from the rough intellectual gladiator of Grub Street. Johnson spoke his mind of his rival without reserve. "I thought," he said, "that this man had been a Lord among wits; but I find he is only a wit among Lords." And of the *Letters* he said more keenly that they taught the morals of a harlot and the manners of a dancing-master. Chesterfield's opinion of Johnson is indicated by the description in his *Letters* of a "respectable Hottentot, who throws his meat anywhere but down his throat." This absurd person, said Chesterfield, "was not only uncouth in manners and warm in dispute, but behaved exactly in the same way to superiors, equals, and inferiors; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, absurdly to two of the three." *Hinc illæ lacrymæ!*

Johnson, in my opinion, was not far wrong in his judgment, though it would be a gross injustice to regard Chesterfield as nothing but a fribble. But men representing two such antithetic types were not likely to admire each other's good qualities. Whatever had been the intercourse between them, Johnson

was naturally annoyed when the dignified noble published two articles in the *World*—a periodical supported by such polite personages as himself and Horace Walpole—in which the need of a dictionary was set forth, and various courtly compliments described Johnson's fitness for a dictatorship over the language. Nothing could be more prettily turned; but it meant, and Johnson took it to mean, I should like to have the dictionary dedicated to me: such a compliment would add a feather to my cap, and enable me to appear to the world as a patron of literature as well as an authority upon manners. "After making great professions," as Johnson said, "he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a scribbling in the *World* about it." Johnson therefore bestowed upon the noble earl a piece of his mind in a letter which was not published till it came out in Boswell's biography.

"My Lord,—I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the *World* that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honor which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself, *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*—that I

might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending ; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the arts of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could ; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

“Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms and was repulsed from your door ; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, and one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

“The shepherd in *Virgil* grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

“Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground encumbers him with help ? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind ; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it ; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing

that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

“Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, should less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

“Your Lordship’s most humble, most obedient servant,

“SAM JOHNSON.”

The letter is one of those knock-down blows to which no answer is possible, and upon which comment is superfluous. It was, as Mr. Carlyle calls it, “the far-famed blast of doom proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield and through him, of the listening world, that patronage should be no more.”

That is all that can be said; yet perhaps it should be added that Johnson remarked that he had once received £10 from Chesterfield, though he thought the assistance too inconsiderable to be mentioned in such a letter. Hawkins also states that Chesterfield sent overtures to Johnson through two friends, one of whom, long Sir Thomas Robinson, stated that, if he were rich enough (a judicious clause) he would himself settle £500 a year upon Johnson. Johnson replied that if the first peer of the realm made such an offer, he would show him the way downstairs. Hawkins is startled at this insolence, and at Johnson’s uniform assertion that an offer of money was an insult. We cannot tell what was the history of the

£10; but Johnson, in spite of Hawkin's righteous indignation, was in fact too proud to be a beggar, and owed to his pride his escape from the fate of Savage.

The appearance of the *Dictionary* placed Johnson in the position described soon afterwards by Smollett. He was henceforth "the great Cham of Literature"—a monarch sitting in the chair previously occupied by his namesake, Ben, by Dryden, and by Pope; but which has since that time been vacant. The world of literature has become too large for such authority. Complaints were not seldom uttered at the time. Goldsmith has urged that Boswell wished to make a monarchy of what ought to be a republic. Goldsmith, who would have been the last man to find serious fault with the dictator, thought the dictatorship objectionable. Some time indeed was still to elapse before we can say that Johnson was firmly seated on the throne; but the *Dictionary* and the *Rambler* had given him a position not altogether easy to appreciate, now that the *Dictionary* has been superseded and the *Rambler* gone out of fashion. His name was the highest at this time (1755) in the ranks of pure literature. The fame of Warburton possibly bulked larger for the moment, and one of his flatterers was comparing him to the Colossus which bestrides the petty world of contemporaries. But Warburton had subsided into episcopal repose, and literature had been for him a stepping-stone rather than an ultimate aim. Hume had written works of far more enduring influence than Johnson; but they

were little read though generally abused, and scarcely belong to the purely literary history. The first volume of his *History of England* had appeared (1754), but had not succeeded. The second was just coming out. Richardson was still giving laws to his little seraglio of adoring women; Fielding had died (1754), worn out by labor and dissipation; Smollett was active in the literary trade, but not in such a way as to increase his own dignity or that of his employment; Gray was slowly writing a few lines of exquisite verse in his retirement at Cambridge; two young Irish adventurers, Burke and Goldsmith, were just coming to London to try their fortune; Adam Smith made his first experiment as an author by reviewing the *Dictionary* in the *Edinburgh Review*; Robertson had not yet appeared as a historian; Gibbon was at Lausanne repenting of his old brief lapse into Catholicism as an act of undergraduate's folly; and Cowper, after three years of "giggling and making giggle" with Thurlow in an attorney's office, was now entered at the Temple and amusing himself at times with literature in company with such small men of letters as Colman, Bonnell Thornton, and Lloyd. It was a slack tide of literature; the generation of Pope had passed away and left no successors, and no writer of the time could be put in competition with the giant now known as "Dictionary Johnson."

When the last sheet of the *Dictionary* had been carried to the publisher, Millar, Johnson asked the messenger, "What did he say?" "Sir," said the messenger, "he said, 'Thank God I have done with

him.” “I am glad,” replied Johnson, “that he thanks God for anything.” Thankfulness for relief from seven years’ toil seems to have been Johnson’s predominant feeling: and he was not anxious for a time to take any new labors upon his shoulders. Some years passed which have left few traces either upon his personal or his literary history. He contributed a good many reviews in 1756–7 to the *Literary Magazine*, one of which, a review of Soame Jenyns, is amongst his best performances. To a weekly paper he contributed for two years, from April, 1758, to April, 1760, a set of essays called the *Idler*, on the old *Rambler* plan. He did some small literary cobbler’s work, receiving a guinea for a prospectus to a newspaper and ten pounds for correcting a volume of poetry. He had advertised in 1756 a new edition of Shakspeare which was to appear by Christmas, 1757: but he dawdled over it so unconscionably that it did not appear for nine years; and then only in consequence of taunts from Churchill, who accused him with too much plausibility of cheating his subscribers.

He for subscribers baits his hook ;
And takes your cash : but where’s the book ?
No matter where ; wise fear, you know
Forbids the robbing of a foe ;
But what to serve our private ends
Forbids the cheating of our friends ?

In truth, his constitutional indolence seems to have gained advantages over him, when the stimulus of a heavy task was removed. In his meditations, there are many complaints of his “sluggishness” and

resolutions of amendment. "A kind of strange oblivion has spread over me," he says in April, 1764, "so that I know not what has become of the last years, and perceive that incidents and intelligence pass over me without leaving any impression."

It seems, however, that he was still frequently in difficulties. Letters are preserved showing that in the beginning of 1756, Richardson became surety for him for a debt, and lent him six guineas to release him from arrest. An event which happened three years later illustrates his position and character. In January, 1759, his mother died at the age of ninety. Johnson was unable to come to Lichfield, and some deeply pathetic letters to her and her stepdaughter, who lived with her, record his emotions. Here is the last sad farewell upon the snapping of the most sacred of human ties.

"Dear Honored Mother," he says in a letter enclosed to Lucy Porter, the stepdaughter, "neither your condition nor your character make it fit for me to say much. You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness of all that I have done ill, and of all that I have omitted to do well. God grant you His Holy Spirit, and receive you to everlasting happiness for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Lord Jesus receive your spirit. I am, dear, dear mother,

"Your dutiful son,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON."

Johnson managed to raise twelve guineas, six of them borrowed from his printer, to send to his dying mother. In order to gain money for her funeral expenses and some small debts, he wrote the story of *Rasselas*. It was composed in the evenings of a single week, and sent to press as it was written. He received £100 for this, perhaps the most successful of his minor writings, and £25 for a second edition. It was widely translated and universally admired. One of the strangest of literary coincidences is the contemporary appearance of this work and Voltaire's *Candide*; to which, indeed, it bears in some respects so strong a resemblance that, but for Johnson's apparent contradiction, we would suppose that he had at least heard some description of its design. The two stories, though widely differing in tone and style, are among the most powerful expressions of the melancholy produced in strong intellects by the sadness and sorrows of the world. The literary excellence of *Candide* has secured for it a wider and more enduring popularity than has fallen to the lot of Johnson's far heavier production. But *Rasselas* is a book of singular force, and bears the most characteristic impression of Johnson's peculiar temperament.

A great change was approaching in Johnson's circumstances. When George III. came to the throne, it struck some of his advisers that it would be well, as Boswell puts it, to open "a new and brighter prospect to men of literary merit." This commendable design was carried out by offering to Johnson a pension of three hundred a year. Considering that

such men as Horace Walpole and his like were enjoying sinecures of more than twice as many thousands for being their father's sons, the bounty does not strike one as excessively liberal. It seems to have been really intended as some set-off against other pensions bestowed upon various hangers-on of the Scotch prime minister, Bute. Johnson was coupled with the contemptible scribbler, Shebbeare, who had lately been in the pillory for a Jacobite libel (a "he-bear" and a "she-bear," said the facetious newspapers), and when a few months afterwards a pension of £200 a year was given to the old actor, Sheridan, Johnson growled out that it was time for him to resign his own. Somebody kindly repeated the remark to Sheridan, who would never afterwards speak to Johnson.

The pension, though very welcome to Johnson, who seems to have been in real distress at the time, suggested some difficulty. Johnson had unluckily spoken of a pension in his *Dictionary* as "generally understood to mean pay given to a State hireling for treason to his country." He was assured, however, that he did not come within the definition; and that the reward was given for what he had done, not for anything that he was expected to do. After some hesitation, Johnson consented to accept the payment thus offered without the direct suggestion of any obligation, though it was probably calculated that he would in case of need, be the more ready, as actually happened, to use his pen in defence of authority. He had not compromised his independence and might

fairly laugh at angry comments. "I wish," he said afterwards, "that my pension were twice as large, that they might make twice as much noise." "I cannot now curse the House of Hanover," was his phrase on another occasion: "but I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year." In truth, his Jacobitism was by this time, whatever it had once been, nothing more than a humorous crotchet, giving opportunity for the expression of Tory prejudice.

"I hope you will now purge and live cleanly like a gentleman," was Beauclerk's comment upon hearing of his friend's accession of fortune, and as Johnson is now emerging from Grub Street, it is desirable to consider what manner of man was to be presented to the wider circles that were opening to receive him.

CHAPTER III.

JOHNSON AND HIS FRIENDS.

It is not till some time after Johnson had come into the enjoyment of his pension, that we first see him through the eyes of competent observers. The Johnson of our knowledge, the most familiar figure to all students of English literary history had already long passed the prime of life, and done the greatest part of his literary work. His character, in the common phrase, had been "formed" years before; as, indeed, people's characters are chiefly formed in the cradle; and, not only his character, but the habits which are learnt in the great schoolroom of the world were fixed beyond any possibility of change. The strange eccentricities which had now become a second nature, amazed the society in which he was for over twenty years a prominent figure. Unsympathetic observers, those especially to whom the Chesterfield type represented the ideal of humanity, were simply disgusted or repelled. The man, they thought, might be in his place at a Grub Street pot-house; but had no business in a lady's drawing-room. If he had been modest and retiring, they might have put up with his defects; but Johnson was not a person whose qualities, good or bad, were of a kind to be ignored. Naturally enough, the fashionable world

cared little for the rugged old giant. "The great," said Johnson, "had tried him and given him up; they had seen enough of him;" and his reason was pretty much to the purpose. "Great lords and great ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped," especially not, one may add, by an unwashed fist.

It is easy to blame them now. Everybody can see that a saint in beggar's rags is intrinsically better than a sinner in gold lace. But the principle is one of those which serves us for judging the dead, much more than for regulating our own conduct. Those, at any rate, may throw the first stone at the Horace Walpoles and Chesterfields, who are quite certain that they would ask a modern Johnson to their houses. The trial would be severe. Poor Mrs. Boswell complained grievously of her husband's idolatry. "I have seen many a bear led by a man," she said; "but I never before saw a man led by a bear." The truth is, as Boswell explains, that the sage's uncouth habits, such as turning the candles' heads downwards to make them burn more brightly, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, "could not but be disagreeable to a lady."

He had other habits still more annoying to people of delicate perceptions. A hearty despiser of all affectations, he diepised especially the affectation of indifference to the pleasures of the table. "For my part," he said, "I mind my belly very studiously and very carefully, for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else." Avowing this principle he would innocently

give himself the airs of a scientific epicure. "I, madam," he said to the terror of a lady with whom he was about to sup, "who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home, for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook, whereas, madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." But his pretensions to exquisite taste are by no means borne out by independent witnesses. "He laughs," said Tom Davies, "like a rhinoceros," and he seems to have eaten like a wolf—savagely, silently, and with indiscriminating fury. He was not a pleasant object during this performance. He was totally absorbed in the business of the moment, a strong perspiration came out, and the veins of his forehead swelled. He liked coarse satisfying dishes—boiled pork and veal-pie stuffed with plums and sugar; and in regard to wine he seems to have accepted the doctrines of the critic of a certain fluid professing to be port, who asked, "What more can you want? It is black, and it is thick, and it makes you drunk." Claret, as Johnson put it, "is the liquor for boys, and port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy." He could, however, refrain, though he could not be moderate, and for all the latter part of his life, from 1766, he was a total abstainer. Nor, it should be added, does he ever appear to have sought for more than exhilaration from wine. His earliest intimate friend, Hector, said that he had never but once seen him drunk.

His appetite for more innocent kinds of food was equally excessive. He would eat seven or eight peaches before breakfast, and declared that he had only once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he wished. His consumption of tea was prodigious, beyond all precedent. Hawkins quotes Bishop Burnet as having drunk sixteen large cups every morning, a feat which would entitle him to be reckoned as a rival. "A hardened and shameless tea-drinker," Johnson called himself, who "with tea amuses the evenings, with tea solaces the midnights, and with tea welcomes the mornings." One of his teapots, preserved by a relic-hunter, contained two quarts, and he professed to have consumed five and twenty cups at a sitting. Poor Mrs. Thrale complains that he often kept her up making tea for him till four in the morning. His reluctance to go to bed was due to the fact that his nights were periods of intense misery; but the vast potations of tea can scarcely have tended to improve them.

The huge frame was clad in the raggedest of garments, until his acquaintance with the Thrales led to a partial reform. His wigs were generally burnt in front, from his shortsighted knack of reading with his head close to the candle; and at the Thrales, the butler stood ready to effect a change of wigs as he passed into the dining-room. Once or twice we have accounts of his bursting into unusual splendor. He appeared at the first representation of *Irene* in a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold; and on one of his first interviews with Goldsmith he took the trouble to

array himself decently, because Goldsmith was reported to have justified slovenly habits by the precedent of the leader of his craft. Goldsmith, judging by certain famous suits, seems to have profited by the hint more than his preceptor. As a rule, Johnson's appearance, before he became a pensioner, was worthy of the proverbial manner of Grub Street. Beauclerk used to describe how he had once taken a French lady of distinction to see Johnson in his chambers. On descending the staircase they heard a noise like thunder. Johnson was pursuing them, struck by a sudden sense of the demands upon his gallantry. He brushed in between Beauclerk and the lady, and seizing her hand conducted her to her coach. A crowd of people collected to stare at the sage, dressed in rusty brown, with a pair of old shoes for slippers, a shrivelled wig on the top of his head, and with shirtsleeves and the knees of his breeches hanging loose. In those days clergymen and physicians were only just abandoning the use of their official costume in the streets, and Johnson's slovenly habits were even more marked than they would be at present. "I have no passion for clean linen," he once remarked, and it is to be feared that he must sometimes have offended more senses than one.

In spite of his uncouth habits of dress and manners, Johnson claimed and, in a sense, with justice, to be a polite man. "I look upon myself," he said once to Boswell, "as a very polite man." He could show the stately courtesy of a sound Tory, who cordially accepts the principle of social distinction, but

has far too strong a sense of self-respect to fancy that compliance with the ordinary conventions can possibly lower his own position. Rank of the spiritual kind was especially venerable to him. "I should as soon have thought of contradicting a bishop," was a phrase which marked the highest conceivable degree of deference to a man whom he respected. Nobody, again, could pay more effective compliments, when he pleased; and the many female friends who have written of him agree, that he could be singularly attractive to women. Women are, perhaps, more inclined than men to forgive external roughness in consideration of the great charm of deep tenderness in a thoroughly masculine nature. A characteristic phrase was his remark to Miss Monckton. She had declared, in opposition to one of Johnson's prejudices, that Sterne's writings were pathetic: "I am sure," she said, "they have affected me." "Why," said Johnson, smiling and rolling himself about, "that is because, dearest, you are a dunce!" When she mentioned this to him some time afterwards he replied: "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it." The truth could not be more neatly put.

Boswell notes, with some surprise, that when Johnson dined with Lord Monboddoo he insisted upon rising when the ladies left the table, and took occasion to observe that politeness was "fictitious benevolence," and equally useful in common intercourse. Boswell's surprise seems to indicate that Scotchmen in those days were even greater bears than Johnson. He always insisted, as Miss Reynolds tells us, upon show-

ing ladies to their carriages through Bolt Court, though his dress was such that her readers would, she thinks, be astonished that any man in his senses should have shown himself in it abroad or even at home. Another odd indication of Johnson's regard for good manners, so far as his lights would take him, was the extreme disgust with which he often referred to a certain footman in Paris, who used his fingers in place of sugar-tongs. So far as Johnson could recognize bad manners he was polite enough, though unluckily the limitation is one of considerable importance.

Johnson's claims to politeness were sometimes, it is true, put in a rather startling form. "Every man of any education," he once said to the amazement of his hearers, "would rather be called a rascal than accused of deficiency in the graces." Gibbon, who was present, silyly inquired of a lady whether among all her acquaintance she could not find *one* exception. According to Mrs. Thrale, he went even further. Dr. Barnard, he said, was the only man who had ever done justice to his good breeding; "and you may observe," he added, "that I am well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity." He proceeded, according to Mrs. Thrale, but the report a little taxes our faith, to claim the virtues not only of respecting ceremony, but of never contradicting or interrupting his hearers. It is rather odd that Dr. Barnard had once a sharp altercation with Johnson, and avenged himself by a a sarcastic copy of verses in which, after professing to learn perfections from different friends, he says,—

Johnson shall teach me how to place,
In varied light, each borrow'd grace;
From him I'll learn to write;
Copy his clear familiar style,
And by the roughness of his file,
Grow, like himself, polite.

Johnson, on this as on many occasions, repented of the blow as soon as it was struck, and sat down by Barnard, "literally smoothing down his arms and knees," and beseeching pardon. Barnard accepted his apologies, but went home and wrote his little copy of verses.

Johnson's shortcomings in civility were no doubt due, in part, to the narrowness of his faculties of perception. He did not know, for he could not see, that his uncouth gestures and slovenly dress were offensive; and he was not so well able to observe others as to shake off the manners contracted in Grub Street. It is hard to study a manual of etiquette late in life, and for a man of Johnson's imperfect faculties it was probably impossible. Errors of this kind were always pardonable, and are now simply ludicrous. But Johnson often shocked his companions by more indefensible conduct. He was irascible, overbearing, and, when angry, vehement beyond all propriety. He was a "tremendous companion," said Garrick's brother; and men of gentle nature, like Charles Fox, often shrank from his company, and perhaps exaggerated his brutality.

Johnson, who had long regarded conversation as the chief amusement, came in later years to regard it as almost the chief employment of life; and he had

studied the art with the zeal of a man pursuing a favorite hobby. He had always, as he told Sir Joshua Reynolds, made it a principle to talk on all occasions as well as he could. He had thus obtained a mastery over his weapons which made him one of the most accomplished of conversational gladiators. He had one advantage which has pretty well disappeared from modern society, and the disappearance of which has been destructive to excellence of talk. A good talker, even more than a good orator, implies a good audience. Modern society is too vast and too restless to give a conversationalist a fair chance. For the formation of real proficiency in the art, friends should meet often, sit long, and be thoroughly at ease. A modern audience generally breaks up before it is well warmed through, and includes enough strangers to break the magic circle of social electricity. The clubs in which Johnson delighted were excellently adapted to foster his peculiar talent. There a man could "fold his legs and have his talk out"—a pleasure hardly to be enjoyed now. And there a set of friends meeting regularly, and meeting to talk, learnt to sharpen each other's skill in all dialectic manœuvres. Conversation may be pleasantest, as Johnson admitted, when two friends meet quietly to exchange their minds without any thought of display. But conversation considered as a game, as a bout of intellectual sword-play, has also charms which Johnson intensely appreciated. His talk was not of the encyclopædia variety, like that of some more modern celebrities ; but it was full of appos-

ite illustrations and unrivalled in keen argument, rapid flashes of wit and humor, scornful retort and dexterous sophistry. Sometimes he would fell his adversary at a blow; his sword, as Boswell said, would be through your body in an instant without preliminary flourishes; and in the excitement of talking for victory, he would use any device that came to hand. "There is no arguing with Johnson," said Goldsmith, quoting a phrase from Cibber, "for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt-end of it."

Johnson's view of conversation is indicated by his remark about Burke. "That fellow," he said at a time of illness, "calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now, it would kill me." "It is when you come close to a man in conversation," he said on another occasion, "that you discover what his real abilities are. To make a speech in an assembly is a knack. Now I honor Thurlow, sir; Thurlow is a fine fellow, he fairly puts his mind to yours."

Johnson's retorts were fair play under the conditions of the game, as it is fair play to kick an opponent's shins at football. But of course a man who had, as it were, become the acknowledged champion of the ring, and who had an irascible and thoroughly dogmatic temper, was tempted to become unduly imperious. In the company of which Savage was a distinguished member, one may guess that the conversational fervor sometimes degenerated into horse-play. Want of arguments would be supplied by personality, and the champion would avenge him-

self by brutality on an opponent who happened for once to be getting the best of him. Johnson, as he grew older and got into more polished society, became milder in his manners; but he had enough of the old spirit left in him to break forth at times with ungovernable fury, and astonish the well-regulated minds of respectable ladies and gentlemen.

Anecdotes illustrative of this ferocity abound, and his best friends—except, perhaps, Reynolds and Burke—had all to suffer in turn. On one occasion, when he had made a rude speech even to Reynolds, Boswell states, though with some hesitation, his belief that Johnson actually blushed. The records of his contests in this kind fill a large space in Boswell's pages. That they did not lead to worse consequences shows his absence of rancor. He was always ready and anxious for a reconciliation, though he would not press for one if his first overtures were rejected. There was no venom in the wounds he inflicted, for there was no ill-nature; he was rough in the heat of the struggle, and in such cases careless in distributing blows; but he never enjoyed giving pain. None of his tiffs ripened into permanent quarrels, and he seems scarcely to have lost a friend. He is a pleasant contrast in this, as in much else, to Horace Walpole, who succeeded, in the course of a long life, in breaking with almost all his old friends. No man set a higher value upon friendship than Johnson. "A man," he said to Reynolds, "ought to keep his friendship in constant repair;" or he would find himself left alone as he grew older. "I

look upon a day as lost," he said later in life, "in which I do not make a new acquaintance." Making new acquaintances did not involve dropping the old. The list of his friends is a long one, and includes, as it were, successive layers, superposed upon each other, from the earliest period of his life.

This is so marked a feature in Johnson's character, that it will be as well at this point to notice some of the friendships from which he derived the greatest part of his happiness. Two of his schoolfellows, Hector and Taylor, remained his intimates through life. Hector survived to give information to Boswell, and Taylor, then a prebendary of Westminster, read the funeral service over his old friend in the Abbey. He showed, said some of the bystanders, too little feeling. The relation between the two men was not one of special tenderness; indeed they were so little congenial that Boswell rather gratuitously suspected his venerable teacher of having an eye to Taylor's will. It seems fairer to regard the acquaintance as an illustration of that curious adhesiveness which made Johnson cling to less attractive persons. At any rate, he did not show the complacency of the proper will-hunter. Taylor was rector of Bosworth and squire of Ashbourne. He was a fine specimen of the squire-parson; a justice of the peace, a warm politician, and what was worse, a warm Whig. He raised gigantic bulls, bragged of selling cows for 120 guineas and more, and kept a noble butler in purple clothes and a large white wig. Johnson respected Taylor as a sensible man, but was ready to have a

round with him on occasion. He snorted contempt when Taylor talked of breaking some small vessels if he took an emetic. "Bah," said the doctor, who regarded a valetudinarian as a "scoundrel," "if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't." Nay, if he did not condemn Taylor's cows, he criticized his bulldog with cruel acuteness. "No, sir, he is not well shaped; for there is not the quick transition from the thickness of the fore-part to the *tenuity*—the thin part—behind, which a bulldog ought to have." On the more serious topic of politics his Jacobite fulminations roused Taylor "to a pitch of bellowing." Johnson roared out that if the people of England were fairly polled (this was in 1777) the present king would be sent away to-night, and his adherents hanged to-morrow. Johnson, however, rendered Taylor the substantial service of writing sermons for him, two volumes of which were published after they were both dead; and Taylor must have been a bold man, if it be true, as has been said, that he refused to preach a sermon written by Johnson upon Mrs. Johnson's death, on the ground that it spoke too favorably of the character of the deceased.

Johnson paid frequent visits to Lichfield, to keep up his old friends. One of them was Lucy Porter, his wife's daughter, with whom, according to Miss Seward, he had been in love before he married her mother. He was at least tenderly attached to her through life. And, for the most part, the good

people of Lichfield seem to have been proud of their fellow-townsmen, and gave him a substantial proof of their sympathy by continuing to him, on favorable terms, the lease of a house originally granted to his father. There was, indeed, one remarkable exception in Miss Seward, who belonged to a genus specially contemptible to the old doctor. She was one of the fine ladies who dabbled in poetry, and aimed at being the centre of a small literary circle at Lichfield. Her letters are amongst the most amusing illustrations of the petty affectations and squabbles characteristic of such a provincial clique. She evidently hated Johnson at the bottom of her small soul; and, indeed, though Johnson once paid her a preposterous compliment—a weakness of which this stern moralist was apt to be guilty in the company of ladies—he no doubt trod pretty roughly upon some of her pet vanities.

By far the most celebrated of Johnson's Lichfield friends was David Garrick, in regard to whom his relations were somewhat peculiar. Reynolds said that Johnson considered Garrick to be his own property, and would never allow him to be praised or blamed by any one else without contradiction. Reynolds composed a pair of imaginary dialogues to illustrate the proposition, in one of which Johnson attacks Garrick in answer to Reynolds, and in the other defends him in answer to Gibbon. The dialogues seem to be very good reproductions of the Johnsonian manner, though perhaps the courteous Reynolds was a little too much impressed by its roughness; and they probably include many genuine

remarks of Johnson's. It is remarkable that the praise is far more pointed and elaborate than the blame, which turns chiefly upon the general inferiority of an actor's position. And, in fact, this seems to have corresponded to Johnson's opinion about Garrick as gathered from Boswell.

The two men had at bottom a considerable regard for each other, founded upon old association, mutual services, and reciprocal respect for talents of very different orders. But they were so widely separated by circumstances, as well as by a radical opposition of temperament, that any close intimacy could hardly be expected. The bear and the monkey are not likely to be intimate friends. Garrick's rapid elevation in fame and fortune seems to have produced a certain degree of envy in his old scholmaster. A grave moral philosopher has, of course, no right to look askance at the rewards which fashion lavishes upon men of lighter and less lasting merit, and which he professes to despise. Johnson, however, was troubled with a rather excessive allowance of human nature. Moreover he had the good old-fashioned contempt for players, characteristic both of the Tory and the inartistic mind. He asserted roundly that he looked upon players as no better than dancing-dogs. "But, sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?" "Yes, sir, as some dogs dance better than others." So when Goldsmith accused Garrick of grossly flattering the queen, Johnson exclaimed, "And as to meanness—how is it mean in a player, a showman, a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling,

to flatter his queen?" At another time Boswell suggested that we might respect a great player. "What! sir," exclaimed Johnson, "a fellow who claps a hump upon his back and a lump on his leg and cries, '*I am Richard III.*'? Nay, sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two things: he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and music in his performance—the player only recites."

Such sentiments were not very likely to remain unknown to Garrick nor to put him at ease with Johnson, whom, indeed, he always suspected of laughing at him. They had a little tiff on account of Johnson's Edition of Shakspeare. From some misunderstanding, Johnson did not make use of Garrick's collection of old plays. Johnson, it seems, thought that Garrick should have courted him more, and perhaps sent the plays to his house; whereas Garrick, knowing that Johnson treated books with a roughness ill-suited to their constitution, thought that he had done quite enough by asking Johnson to come to his library. The revenge—if it was revenge—taken by Johnson was to say nothing of Garrick in his Preface, and to glance obliquely at his non-communication of his rarities. He seems to have thought that it would be a lowering of Shakspeare to admit that his fame owed anything to Garrick's exertions.

Boswell innocently communicated to Garrick a criticism of Johnson's upon one of his poems—

I'd smile with the simple and feed with the poor.

"Let me smile with the wise, and feed with the

rich," was Johnson's tolerably harmless remark. Garrick, however, did not like it, and when Boswell tried to console him by saying that Johnson gored everybody in turn, and added, "*fœnum habet in cornu.*" "Ay," said Garrick vehemently, "he has a whole mow of it."

The most unpleasant incident was when Garrick proposed rather too freely to be a member of the Club. Johnson said that the first duke in England had no right to use such language, and said, according to Mrs. Thrale, "If Garrick does apply, I'll blackball him. Surely we ought to be able to sit in a society like ours—

'Unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or player!'"

Nearly ten years afterwards, however, Johnson favored his election, and when he died, declared that the Club should have a year's widowhood. No successor to Garrick was elected during that time.

Johnson sometimes ventured to criticise Garrick's acting, but here Garrick could take his full revenge. The purblind Johnson was not, we may imagine, much of a critic in such matters. Garrick reports him to have said of an actor at Lichfield, "There is a courtly vivacity about the fellow"; when, in fact, said Garrick, "he was the most vulgar ruffian that ever went upon boards."

In spite of such collisions of opinion and mutual criticism, Johnson seems to have spoken in the highest terms of Garrick's good qualities, and they had many pleasant meetings. Garrick takes a prominent part

in two or three of the best conversations in Boswell, and seems to have put his interlocutors in specially good temper. Johnson declared him to be "the first man in the world for sprightly conversation." He said that Dryden had written much better prologues than any of Garrick's, but that Garrick had written more good prologues than Dryden. He declared that it was wonderful how little Garrick had been spoiled by all the flattery that he had received. No wonder if he was a little vain: "a man who is perpetually flattered in every mode that can be conceived: so many bellows have blown the fuel, that one wonders he is not by this time become a cinder!" "If all this had happened to me," he said on another occasion, "I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down everybody that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber and Quin, they'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to us," smiling. He admitted at the same time that Garrick had raised the profession of a player. He defended Garrick, too, against the common charge of avarice. Garrick, as he pointed out, had been brought up in a family whose study it was to make fourpence go as far as fourpence-halfpenny. Johnson remembered in early days drinking tea with Garrick when Peg Woffington made it, and made it, as Garrick grumbled, "as red as blood." But when Garrick became rich he became liberal. He had, so Johnson declared, given away more money than any man in England.

After Garrick's death, Johnson took occasion to

say, in the *Lives of the Poets*, that the death "had eclipsed the gaiety of nations and diminished the public stock of harmless pleasures." Boswell ventured to criticise the observation rather spitefully. "Why *nations*? Did his gaiety extend further than his own nation?" "Why, sir," replied Johnson, "some exaggeration must be allowed. Besides, we may say *nations* if we allow the Scotch to be a nation, and to have gaiety—which they have not." On the whole, in spite of various drawbacks, Johnson's reported observations upon Garrick will appear to be discriminative, and yet, on the whole, strongly favorable to his character. Yet we are not quite surprised that Mrs. Garrick did not respond to a hint thrown out by Johnson, that he would be glad to write the life of his friend.

At Oxford, Johnson acquired the friendship of Dr. Adams, afterwards Master of Pembroke and author of a once well-known reply to Hume's argument upon miracles. He was an amiable man, and was proud to do the honors of the university to his old friend, when, in later years, Johnson revisited the much-loved scenes of his neglected youth. The warmth of Johnson's regard for old days is oddly illustrated by an interview recorded by Boswell with one Edwards, a fellow-student whom he met again in 1778, not having previously seen him since 1729. They had lived in London for forty years without once meeting, a fact more surprising then than now. Boswell eagerly gathered up the little scraps of college anecdote which the meeting produced, but per-

haps his best find was a phrase of Edwards himself, "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson," he said; "I have tried, too, in my time to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in." The phrase, as Boswell truly says, records an exquisite trait of character.

Of the friends who gathered round Johnson during his period of struggle, many had vanished before he became well known. The best loved of all seems to have been Dr. Bathurst, a physician, who, failing to obtain practice, joined the expedition to Havannah, and fell a victim to the climate (1762). Upon him Johnson pronounced a panegyric which has contributed a proverbial phrase to the language. "Dear Bathurst," he said, "was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig; he was a *very good hater*." Johnson remembered Bathurst in his prayers for years after his loss, and received from him a peculiar legacy. Francis Barber had been the negro slave of Bathurst's father, who left him his liberty by will. Dr. Bathurst allowed him to enter Johnson's service; and Johnson sent him to school at considerable expense, and afterwards retained him in his service with little interruption till his own death. Once Barber ran away to sea, and was discharged, oddly enough, by the good offices of Wilkes, to whom Smollett applied on Johnson's behalf. Barber became an important member of Johnson's family, some of whom reproached him for his liberality to the nigger. No one ever solved the great problem as to what services

were rendered by Barber to his master, whose wig was "as impenetrable by a comb as a quickset hedge," and whose clothes were never touched by the brush.

Among the other friends of this period must be reckoned his biographer, Hawkins, an attorney who was afterwards Chairman of the Middlesex Justices, and knighted on presenting an address to the King. Boswell regarded poor Sir John Hawkins with all the animosity of a rival author, and with some spice of wounded vanity. He was grievously offended, so at least says Sir John's daughter, on being described in the *Life of Johnson* as "Mr. James Boswell" without a solitary epithet such as celebrated or well-known. If that was really his feelings he had his revenge; for no one book ever so suppressed another as Boswell's *Life* suppressed Hawkins's. In truth, Hawkins was a solemn prig, remarkable chiefly for the unusual intensity of his conviction that all virtue consists in respectability. He had a special aversion to "goodness of heart," which he regarded as another name for a quality properly called extravagance or vice. Johnson's tenacity of old acquaintance introduced him into the Club, where he made himself so disagreeable, especially, as it seems, by rudeness to Burke, that he found it expedient to invent a pretext for resignation. Johnson called him a "very unclubable man," and may perhaps have intended him in the quaint description: "I really believe him to be an honest man at the bottom; though, to be sure, he is rather penurious, and he is somewhat mean; and it must be owned he has some degree of

brutality, and is not without a tendency to savageness that cannot well be defended."

In a list of Johnson's friends it is proper to mention Richardson and Hawkesworth. Richardson seems to have given him substantial help, and was repaid by favorable comparisons with Fielding, scarcely borne out by the verdict of posterity. "Fielding," said Johnson, "could tell the hour by looking at the clock; whilst Richardson knew how the clock was made." "There is more knowledge of the heart," he said at another time, "in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*." Johnson's preference of the sentimentalist to the man whose humor and strong sense were so like his own, shows how much his criticism was biassed by his prejudices; though, of course, Richardson's external decency was a recommendation to the moralist. Hawkesworth's intimacy with Johnson seems to have been chiefly in the period between the *Dictionary* and the pension. He was considered to be Johnson's best imitator; and has vanished like other imitators. His fate, if the very doubtful story believed at the time be true, was a curious one for a friend of Johnson's. He had made some sceptical remarks as to the efficacy of prayer in his preface to the *South Sea Voyages*; and was so bitterly attacked by a "Christian" in the papers, that he destroyed himself by a dose of opium.

Two younger friends, who became disciples of the sage soon after the appearance of the *Rambler*, are prominent figures in the later circle. One of these was Bennet Langton, a man of good family, fine

scholarship, and very amiable character. His exceedingly tall and slender figure was compared by Best to the stork in Raphael's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. Miss Hawkins describes him sitting with one leg twisted round the other as though to occupy the smallest possible space, and playing with his gold snuff-box with a mild countenance and sweet smile. The gentle, modest creature was loved by Johnson, who could warm into unusual eloquence in singing his praises. The doctor, however, was rather fond of discussing with Boswell the faults of his friend. They seem to have chiefly consisted in a certain languor or sluggishness of temperament which allowed his affairs to get into perplexity. Once, when arguing the delicate question as to the propriety of telling a friend of his wife's unfaithfulness, Boswell, after his peculiar fashion, chose to enliven the abstract statement by the purely imaginary hypothesis of Mr. and Mrs. Langton being in this position. Johnson said that it would be useless to tell Langton, because he would be too sluggish to get a divorce. Once Langton was the unconscious cause of one of Johnson's oddest performances. Langton had employed Chambers, a common friend of his and Johnson's, to draw his will. Johnson, talking to Chambers and Boswell, was suddenly struck by the absurdity of his friend's appearing in the character of testator. His companions, however, were utterly unable to see in what the joke consisted; but Johnson laughed obstreperously and irrepressibly: he laughed till he reached the Temple Gate;

and when in Fleet Street went almost into convulsions of hilarity. Holding on by one of the posts in the street, he sent forth such peals of laughter that they seemed in the silence of the night to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch.

Not long before his death, Johnson applied to Langton for spiritual advice. "I desired him to tell me sincerely in what he thought my life was faulty." Langton wrote upon a sheet of paper certain texts recommending Christian charity; and explained, upon inquiry, that he was pointing at Johnson's habit of contradiction. The old doctor began by thanking him earnestly for his kindness; but gradually waxed savage and asked Langton, "in a loud and angry tone, What is your drift, sir?" He complained of the well-meant advice to Boswell, with a sense that he had been unjustly treated. It was a scene for a comedy, as Reynolds observed, to see a penitent get into a passion and belabor his confessor.

Through Langton, Johnson became acquainted with the friend whose manner was in the strongest contrast to his own. Topham Beauclerk was a man of fashion. He was commended to Johnson by a likeness to Charles II., from whom he was descended, being the grandson of the first Duke of St. Alban's. Beauclerk was a man of literary and scientific tastes. He inherited some of the moral laxity which Johnson chose to pardon in his ancestor. Some years after his acquaintance with Boswell he married Lady Diana Spencer, a lady who had been divorced upon his account from her husband, Lord Bolingbroke.

But he took care not to obtrude his faults of life, whatever they may have been, upon the old moralist, who entertained for him a peculiar affection. He specially admired Beauclerk's skill in the use of a more polished, if less vigorous, style of conversation than his own. He envied the ease with which Beauclerk brought out his sly incisive retorts. "No man," he said, "ever was so free when he was going to say a good thing, from a look that expressed that it was coming; or, when he had said it, from a look that expressed that it had come." When Beauclerk was dying (in 1780), Johnson said, with a faltering voice, that he would walk to the extremity of the diameter of the earth to save him. Two little anecdotes are expressive of his tender feeling for this incongruous friend. Boswell had asked him to sup at Beauclerk's. He started, but on the way, recollecting himself, said, "I cannot go; but *I do not love Beauclerk the less.*" Beauclerk had put upon a portrait of Johnson the inscription,—

Ingenium ingens
Inculto latet hoc sub corpore

Langton, who bought the portrait, had the inscription removed. "It was kind in you to take it off," said Johnson; and, after a short pause, "not unkind in him to put it on."

Early in their acquaintance, the two young men, Beau and Lanky, as Johnson called them, had sat up one night at a tavern till three in the morning. The courageous thought struck them that they would

knock up the old philosopher. He came to the door of his chambers, poker in hand, with an old wig for a nightcap. On hearing their errand, the sage exclaimed, "What! is it you, you dogs? I'll have a frisk with you." And so Johnson with the two youths, his juniors by about thirty years, proceeded to make a night of it. They amazed the fruiterers in Covent Garden; they brewed a bowl of bishop in a tavern, while Johnson quoted the poet's address to Sleep,—

"Short, O short, be then thy reign,
And give us to the world again!"

They took a boat to Billingsgate, and Johnson, with Beauclerk, kept up their amusement for the following day, when Langton deserted them to go to breakfast with some young ladies, and Johnson scolded him for leaving his friends "to go and sit with a parcel of wretched *unidea'd* girls." "I shall have my old friend to bail out of the round-house," said Garrick when he heard of this queer alliance; and he told Johnson that he would be in the *Chronicle* for his frolic. "He *durst* not do such a thing. His wife would not let him," was the moralist's retort.

Some friends, known to fame by other titles than their connection with Johnson, had by this time gathered round them. Among them was one, whose art he was unable to appreciate, but whose fine social qualities and dignified equability of temper made him a valued and respected companion. Reynolds had settled in London at the end of 1752. Johnson met

him at the house of Miss Cotterell. Reynolds had specially admired Johnson's *Life of Savage*, and, on their first meeting, happened to make a remark which delighted Johnson. The ladies were regretting the loss of a friend to whom they were under obligations. "You have, however," said Reynolds, "the comfort of being relieved from a burden of gratitude." The saying is a little too much like Rochefoucauld, and too true to be pleasant; but it was one of those keen remarks which Johnson appreciated because they prick a bubble of commonplace moralizing without demanding too literal an acceptance. He went home to sup with Reynolds and became his intimate friend. On another occasion, Johnson was offended by two ladies of rank at the same house, and by way of taking down their pride, asked Reynolds in a loud voice, "How much do you think you and I could get in a week, if we both worked as hard as we could?" "His appearance," says Sir Joshua's sister, Miss Reynolds, "might suggest the poor author; as he was not likely in that place to be a blacksmith or a porter." Poor Miss Reynolds, who tells this story, was another attraction to Reynolds' house. She was a shy, retiring maiden lady, who vexed her famous brother by following in his steps without his talents, and was deeply hurt by his annoyance at the unintentional mockery. Johnson was through life a kind and judicious friend to her; and had attracted her on their first meeting by a significant indication of his character. He said that when going home to his lodgings at one or two in the morning, he often saw

poor children asleep on thresholds and stalls—the wretched “street Arabs” of the day—and that he used to put pennies into their hands that they might buy a breakfast.

Two friends, who deserve to be placed beside Reynolds, came from Ireland to seek their fortunes in London. Edmund Burke, incomparably the greatest writer upon political philosophy in English literature, the master of a style unrivalled for richness, flexibility, and vigor, was radically opposed to Johnson on party questions, though his language upon the French Revolution, after Johnson’s death, would have satisfied even the strongest prejudices of his old friend. But he had qualities which commended him even to the man who called him a “bottomless Whig,” and who generally spoke of Whigs as rascals, and maintained that the first Whig was the devil. If his intellect was wider, his heart was as warm as Johnson’s, and in conversation he merited the generous applause and warm emulation of his friend. Johnson was never tired of praising the extraordinary readiness and spontaneity of Burke’s conversation. “If a man,” he said, “went under a shed at the same time with Burke to avoid a shower, he would say, ‘This is an extraordinary man.’ Or if Burke went into a stable to see his horse dressed, the ostler would say, ‘We have had an extraordinary man here.’” When Burke was first going into Parliament, Johnson said in answer to Hawkins, who wondered that such a man should get a seat, “We who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of

the first men in the country." Speaking of certain other members of Parliament, more after the heart of Sir John Hawkins, he said that he grudged success to a man who made a figure by a knowledge of a few forms, though his mind was "as narrow as the neck of a vinegar cruet;" but that he did not grudge Burke's being the first man in the House of Commons, for he would be the first man everywhere. And Burke equally admitted Johnson's supremacy in conversation. "It is enough for me," he said to some one who regretted Johnson's monopoly of the talk on a particular occasion, "to have rung the bell for him."

The other Irish adventurer, whose career was more nearly moulded upon that of Johnson, came to London in 1756, and made Johnson's acquaintance some time afterwards (in or before 1761). Goldsmith, like Johnson, had tasted the bitterness of an usher's life, and escaped into the scarcely more tolerable regions of Grub Street. After some years of trial, he was becoming known to the booksellers as a serviceable hand, and had two works in his desk destined to lasting celebrity. His landlady (apparently 1764) one day arrested him for debt. Johnson, summoned to his assistance, sent him a guinea and speedily followed. The guinea had already been changed, and Goldsmith was consoling himself with a bottle of Madeira. Johnson corked the bottle, and a discussion of ways and means brought out the manuscript of the *Vicar of Wakefield*. Johnson looked into it, took it to a bookseller, got sixty

pounds for it, and returned to Goldsmith, who paid his rent and administered a sound rating to his landlady.

The relation thus indicated is characteristic; Johnson was as a rough but helpful elder brother to poor Goldsmith, gave him advice, sympathy, and applause, and at times criticised him pretty sharply, or brought down his conversational bludgeon upon his sensitive friend. "He has nothing of the bear but his skin," was Goldsmith's comment upon his clumsy friend, and the two men appreciated each other at bottom. Some of their readers may be inclined to resent Johnson's attitude of superiority. The admirably pure and tender heart, and the exquisite intellectual refinement implied in the *Vicar* and the *Traveller*, force us to love Goldsmith in spite of superficial foibles, and when Johnson prunes or interpolates lines in the *Traveller*, we feel as though a woodman's axe was hacking at a most delicate piece of carving. The evidence of contemporary observers, however, must force impartial readers to admit that poor Goldsmith's foibles were real, however amply compensated by rare and admirable qualities. Garrick's assertion, that he "wrote like an angel but talked like poor Poll," expresses the unanimous opinion of all who had actually seen him. Undoubtedly some of the stories of his childlike vanity, his frankly expressed envy, and his general capacity for blundering, owe something to Boswell's feeling that he was a rival near the throne, and sometimes poor Goldsmith's humorous self-assertion may

have been taken too seriously by blunt English wits. One may doubt, for example, whether he was really jealous of a puppet tossing a pike, and unconscious of his absurdity in saying, "Pshaw! I could do it better myself!" Boswell, however, was too good an observer to misrepresent at random, and he has, in fact, explained very well the true meaning of his remarks. Goldsmith was an excitable Irishman of genius, who tumbled out whatever came uppermost, and revealed the feelings of the moment with utter want of reserve. His self-controlled companions wondered, ridiculed, misinterpreted, and made fewer hits as well as fewer misses. His anxiety to "get in and share" made him, according to Johnson, an "unsocial" companion. Goldsmith, he said, had not temper enough for the game he played. He staked too much. A man might always get a fall from his inferior in the chances of talk, and Goldsmith felt his falls too keenly. He had certainly some trials of temper in Johnson's company. "Stay, stay," said a German, stopping him in the full flow of his eloquence, "Toctor Johnson is going to say something." An Eton Master called Graham, who was supping with the two doctors, and had got to the pitch of looking at one person and talking to another, said, "Doctor, I shall be glad to see *you* at Eton." "I shall be glad to wait on you," said Goldsmith. "No," replied Graham, "'tis not you I mean, Doctor Minor; 'tis Doctor Major there." Poor Goldsmith said afterwards, "Graham is a fellow to make one commit suicide."

Boswell, who attributes some of Goldsmith's sayings about Johnson to envy, said with probable truth that Goldsmith had not more envy than others, but only spoke of it more freely. Johnson argued that we must be angry with a man who had so much of an odious quality that he could not keep it to himself, but let it "boil over." The feeling, at any rate, was momentary and totally free from malice; and Goldsmith's criticisms upon Johnson and his idolators seem to have been fair enough. His objection to Boswell's substituting a monarchy for a republic has already been mentioned. At another time he checked Boswell's flow of panegyric by asking, "Is he like Burke, who winds into a subject like a serpent?" To which Boswell replied with charming irrelevance, "Johnson is the Hercules who strangled serpents in his cradle." The last of Goldsmith's hits was suggested by Johnson's shaking his sides with laughter because Goldsmith admired the skill with which the little fishes in the fable were made to talk in character. "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think," was the retort, "for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales."

In spite of sundry little sparrings, Johnson fully appreciated Goldsmith's genius. Possibly his authority hastened the spread of public appreciation, as he seemed to claim, whilst repudiating Boswell's too flattering theory that it had materially raised Goldsmith's position. When Reynolds quoted the authority of Fox in favor of the *Traveller*, saying that his friends might suspect that they had been too

partial, Johnson replied very truly that the *Traveller* was beyond the need of Fox's praise, and that the partiality of Goldsmith's friends had always been against him. They would hardly give him a hearing. "Goldsmith," he added, "was a man who, whatever he wrote, always did it better than any other man could do." Johnson's settled opinion in fact was that embodied in the famous epitaph with its "nihil tetigit quod non ornavit," and, though dedications are perhaps the only literary product more generally insincere than epitaphs, we may believe that Goldsmith too meant what he said in the dedication of *She Stoops to Conquer*. "It may do me some honor to inform the public that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety."

Though Johnson was thus rich in friendship, two connections have still to be noticed which had an exceptional bearing upon his fame and happiness. In January, 1765, he made the acquaintance of the Thrales. Mr. Thrale was the proprietor of the brewery which afterwards became that of Barclay and Perkins. He was married in 1763 to a Miss Hester Lynch Salisbury, who has become celebrated from her friendship with Johnson.¹ She was a woman of great vivacity and independence of character. She had a sensitive and passionate, if not a very tender

¹ Mrs. Thrale was born in 1740 or 1741, probably the latter. Thrale was born in 1724.

nature, and enough literary culture to appreciate Johnson's intellectual power, and on occasion to play a very respectable part in conversation. She had far more Latin and English scholarship than fell to the lot of most ladies of her day, and wit enough to preserve her from degenerating like some of the "blues," into that most offensive of beings—a feminine prig. Her marriage had been one of convenience, and her husband's want of sympathy, and jealousy of any interference in business matters, forced her, she says, to take to literature as her sole resource. "No wonder," she adds, "if I loved my books and children." It is, perhaps, more to be wondered at that her children seem to have had a rather subordinate place in her affections. The marriage, however, through not of the happiest, was perfectly decorous. Mrs. Thrale discharged her domestic duties irreproachably, even when she seems to have had some real cause of complaint. To the world she eclipsed her husband, a solid respectable man, whose mind, according to Johnson, struck the hours very regularly, though it did not mark the minutes.

The Thrales were introduced to Johnson by their common friend, Arthur Murphy, an actor and dramatist, who afterwards became the editor of Johnson's works. One day, when calling upon Johnson, they found him in such a fit of despair that Thrale tried to stop his mouth by placing his hand before it. The pair then joined in begging Johnson to leave his solitary abode, and come to them at their country-house at Streatham. He complied, and for the

next sixteen years a room was set apart for him, both at Streatham and in their house in Southwark. He passed a large part of his time with them, and derived from the intimacy most of the comfort of his later years. He treated Mrs. Thrale with a kind of paternal gallantry, her age at the time of their acquaintance being about twenty-four, and his fifty-five. He generally called her by the playful name of "my mistress," addressed little poems to her, gave her solid advice, and gradually came to confide to her his miseries and ailments with rather surprising frankness. She flattered and amused him, and soothed his sufferings and did something towards humanizing his rugged exterior. There was one little grievance between them which requires notice. Johnson's pet virtue in private life was a rigid regard for truth. He spoke, it was said of him, as if he was always on oath. He would not, for example, allow his servant to use the phrase "not at home," and even in the heat of conversation resisted the temptation to give point to an anecdote. The lively Mrs. Thrale rather fretted against the restraint, and Johnson admonished her in vain. He complained to Boswell that she was willing to have that said of her, which the best of mankind had died rather than have said of them. Boswell, the faithful imitator of his master in this respect, delighted in taking up the parable. "Now, madam, give me leave to catch you in the fact," he said on one occasion; "it was not an old woman, but an old man whom I mentioned, as having told me this," and he recounts his check to the "lively lady" with intense

complacency. As may be imagined, Boswell and Mrs. Thrale did not love each other, in spite of the well-meant efforts of the sage to bring about a friendly feeling between his disciples.

It is time to close this list of friends with the inimitable Boswell. James Boswell, born in 1740, was the eldest son of a Whig laird and lord of sessions. He had acquired some English friends at the Scotch universities, among whom must be mentioned Mr. Temple, an English clergyman. Boswell's correspondence with Temple, discovered years after his death by a singular chance, and published in 1857, is, after the *Life of Johnson*, one of the most curious exhibitions of character in the language. Boswell was intended for the Scotch bar, and studied civil law at Utrecht in the winter of 1762. It was in the following summer that he made Johnson's acquaintance.

Perhaps the fundamental quality in Boswell's character was his intense capacity for enjoyment. He was, as Mr. Carlyle puts it, "gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character." His love of good living and good drink would have made him a hearty admirer of his countryman, Burns, had Burns been famous in Boswell's youth. Nobody could have joined with more thorough abandonment in the chorus to the poet's liveliest songs in praise of love and wine. He would have made an excellent fourth when "Willie brewed a peck of maut, and Rab and Allan cam to pree," and the drinking contest for

the Whistle commemorated in another lyric would have excited his keenest interest. He was always delighted when he could get Johnson to discuss the ethics and statistics of drinking. "I am myself," he says, "a lover of wine, and therefore curious to hear whatever is remarkable concerning drinking." The remark is *à propos* to a story of Dr. Campbell drinking thirteen bottles of port at a sitting. Lest this should seem incredible, he quotes Johnson's dictum. "Sir, if a man drinks very slowly and lets one glass evaporate before he takes another, I know not how long he may drink." Boswell's faculty for making love was as great as his power of drinking. His letters to Temple record with amusing frankness the vicissitudes of some of his courtships and the versatility of his passions.

Boswell's tastes, however, were by no means limited to sensual or frivolous enjoyments. His appreciation of the bottle was combined with an equally hearty sensibility to more intellectual pleasures. He had not a spark of philosophic or poetic power, but within the ordinary range of such topics as can be discussed at a dinner-party, he had an abundant share of liveliness and intelligence. His palate was as keen for good talk as for good wine. He was an admirable recipient, if not an originator, of shrewd or humorous remarks upon life and manners. What in regard to sensual enjoyment was mere gluttony, appeared in higher matters as an insatiable curiosity. At times this faculty became intolerable to his neighbors. "I will not be baited with what and why,"

said poor Johnson, one day in desperation. "Why is a cow's tail long? Why is a fox's tail bushy?" "Sir," said Johnson on another occasion, when Boswell was cross-examining a third person about him in his presence. "You have but two subjects, yourself and me. I am sick of both." Boswell, however, was not to be repelled by such a retort as this, or even by ruder rebuffs. Once when discussing the means of getting a friend to leave London, Johnson said in revenge for a previous offence. "Nay, sir, we'll send you to him. If your presence doesn't drive a man out of his house, nothing will." Boswell was "horribly shocked," but he still stuck to his victim like a leech, and pried into the minutest details of his life and manners. He observed with conscientious accuracy that though Johnson abstained from milk one fast-day, he did not reject it when put in his cup. He notes the whistlings and puffings, the trick of saying "too-too-too" of his idol: and it was a proud day when he won a bet by venturing to ask Johnson what he did with certain scraped bits of orange-peel. His curiosity was not satisfied on this occasion; but it would have made him the prince of interviewers in these days. Nothing delighted him so much as rubbing shoulders with any famous or notorious person. He scraped acquaintance with Voltaire, Wesley, Rousseau, and Paoli, as well as with Mrs. Rudd, a forgotten heroine of the *Newgate Calendar*. He was as eager to talk to Hume the sceptic, or Wilkes the demagogue, as to the orthodox Tory, Johnson; and, if repelled, it was from no de-

ficiency in daring. In 1767, he took advantage of his travels in Corsica to introduce himself to Lord Chatham, then Prime Minister. The letter modestly ends by asking, "*Could your lordship find time to honor me now and then with a letter?*" I have been told how favorably your lordship has spoken of me. To correspond with a Paoli and with a Chatham is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of virtuous fame." No other young man of the day, we may be sure, would have dared to make such a proposal to the majestic orator.

His absurd vanity, and the greedy craving for notoriety at any cost, would have made Boswell the most offensive of mortals, had not his unfeigned good-humor disarmed enmity. Nobody could help laughing, or be inclined to take offence at his harmless absurdities. Burke said of him that he had so much good-humor naturally, that it was scarcely a virtue. His vanity, in fact, did not generate affectation. Most vain men are vain of qualities which they do not really possess, or possess in a lower degree than they fancy. They are always acting a part, and become touchy from a half-conscious sense of the imposture. But Boswell seems to have had few such illusions. He thoroughly and unfeignedly enjoyed his own peculiarities, and thought his real self much too charming an object to be in need of any disguise. No man, therefore, was ever less embarrassed by any regard for his own dignity. He was as ready to join in a laugh at himself as in a laugh at his neighbors. He reveals his own absurdities to the world at large

as frankly as Pepys confided them to a journal in cypher. He tell us how drunk he got one night in Skye, and how he cured his headache with brandy next morning; and what an intolerable fool he made of himself at an evening party in London after a dinner with the Duke of Montrose, and how Johnson in vain did his best to keep him quiet. His motive for the concession is partly the wish to illustrate Johnson's indulgence, and, in the last case, to introduce a copy of apologetic verses to the lady whose guest he had been. He reveals other weaknesses with equal frankness. One day, he says, "I owned to Johnson that I was occasionally troubled with a fit of narrowness." "Why, sir," said he, "so am I. *But I do not tell it.*" Boswell enjoys the joke far too heartily to act upon the advice.

There is nothing, however, which Boswell seems to have enjoyed more heartily than his own good impulses. He looks upon his virtuous resolution with a sort of æsthetic satisfaction, and with the glow of a virtuous man contemplating a promising penitent. Whilst suffering severely from the consequences of imprudent conduct, he gets a letter of virtuous advice from his friend Temple. He instantly sees himself reformed for the rest of his days. "My warm imagination," he says, "looks forward with great complacency on the sobriety, the healthfulness, and worth of my future life." "Every instance of our doing those things which we ought not to have done, and leaving undone those things which we ought to have done, is attended," as he elsewhere sagely observes, "with

more or less of what is truly remorse ;” but he seems rather to have enjoyed even the remorse. It is needless to say that the complacency was its own reward, and that the resolution vanished like other more eccentric impulses. Music, he once told Johnson, affected him intensely, producing in his mind “alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears, and of daring resolution so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest of the [purely hypothetical] battle.” “Sir,” replied Johnson, “I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool.” Elsewhere he expresses a wish to “fly to the woods,” or retire into a desert, a disposition which Johnson checked by one of his habitual gibes at the quantity of easily accessible desert in Scotland. Boswell is equally frank in describing himself in situations more provocative of contempt than even drunkenness in a drawing-room. He tells us how dreadfully frightened he was by a storm at sea in the Hebrides, and how one of his companions, “with a happy readiness,” made him lay hold of a rope fastened to the masthead, and told him to pull it when he was ordered. Boswell was thus kept quiet in mind and harmless in body.

This extreme simplicity of character makes poor Boswell loveable in his way. If he sought notoriety, he did not so far mistake his powers as to set up for independent notoriety.¹ He was content to shine in

¹ The story is often told how Boswell appeared at the Stratford Jubilee with “Corsica Boswell” in large letters on his hat. The account given apparently by himself is sufficiently

reflected light: and the affectations with which he is charged seem to have been unconscious imitations of his great idol. Miss Burney traced some likeness even in his dress. In the later part of the *Life* we meet phrases in which Boswell is evidently aping the true Johnsonian style. So, for example, when somebody distinguishes between "moral" and "physical necessity;" Boswell exclaims, "Alas, sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be as hard bound by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears." But he specially emulates the profound melancholy of his hero. He seems to have taken pride in his sufferings from hypochondria; though, in truth, his melancholy diverges from Johnson's by as great a difference as that which divides any two varieties in Jaques's classification. Boswell's was the melancholy of a man who spends too much, drinks too much, falls in love too often, and is forced to live in the country in dependence upon a stern old parent, when he is longing for a jovial life in London taverns. Still he was excusably vexed when Johnson refused to believe in the reality of his complaints, and showed scant sympathy to his noisy would-be fellow-sufferer. Some of Boswell's freaks were, in fact, very trying. Once he gave up writing letters for a long time, to see whether Johnson would be induced to write first. Johnson became anxious,

amusing, but the statement is not quite fair. Boswell not unnaturally appeared at a masquerade in the dress of a Corsican chief, and the inscription on his hat seems to have been "Viva la Libertà."

though he half-guessed the truth, and in reference to Boswell's confession gave his disciple a piece of his mind. "Remember that all tricks are either knavish or childish, and that it is as foolish to make experiments upon the constancy of a friend as upon the chastity of a wife."

In other ways Boswell was more successful in aping his friend's peculiarities. When in company with Johnson, he became delightfully pious. "My dear sir," he exclaimed once with unrestrained fervor, "I would fain be a good man, and I am very good now. I fear God and honor the king; I wish to do no ill and to be benevolent to all mankind." Boswell hopes, "for the felicity of human nature," that many experience this mood; though Johnson judiciously suggested that he should not trust too much to impressions. In some matters Boswell showed a touch of independence by outvying the Johnsonian prejudices. He was a warm admirer of feudal principles, and especially held to the propriety of entailing property upon heirs male. Johnson had great difficulty in persuading him to yield to his father's wishes, in a settlement of the estate which contravened this theory. But Boswell takes care to declare that his opinion was not shaken. "Yet let me not be thought," he adds, "harsh or unkind to daughters; for my notion is that they should be treated with great affection and tenderness, and always participate of the prosperity of the family." His estimate of female rights is indicated in another phrase. When Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker, expressed

a hope that the sexes would be equal in another world, Boswell replied, "That is too ambitious, madam. *We* might as well desire to be equal with the angels." Boswell, again, differed from Johnson—who, in spite of his love of authority, had a righteous hatred for all recognized tyranny—by advocating the slave-trade. To abolish that trade would, he says, be robbery of the masters and cruelty to the African savages. Nay, he declares, to abolish it would be

To shut the gates of mercy on mankind !

Boswell was, according to Johnson, "the best travelling companion in the world." In fact, for such purposes, unfailing good-humor and readiness to make talk at all hazards are high recommendations. "If, sir, you were shut up in a castle and a new-born baby with you, what would you do?" is one of his questions to Johnson—a *propos* of nothing. That is exquisitely ludicrous, no doubt; but a man capable of preferring such a remark to silence helps at any rate to keep the ball rolling. A more objectionable trick was his habit not only of asking preposterous or indiscreet questions, but of setting people by the ears out of sheer curiosity. The appearance of so queer a satellite excited astonishment among Johnson's friends. "Who is this Scotch cur at Johnson's heels?" asked some one. "He is not a cur," replied Goldsmith; "he is only a bur. Tom Davis flung him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty of sticking." The bur stuck till the end of

Johnson's life. Boswell visited London whenever he could, and soon began taking careful notes of Johnson's talk. His appearance, when engaged in this task long afterwards, is described by Miss Burney. Boswell, she says, concentrated his whole attention upon his idol, not even answering questions from others. When Johnson spoke, his eyes goggled with eagerness; he leant his ear almost on the Doctor's shoulder; his mouth dropped open to catch every syllable; and he seemed to listen even to Johnson's breathings as though they had some mystical significance. He took every opportunity of edging himself close to Johnson's side even at meal-times, and was sometimes ordered imperiously back to his place like a faithful but over-obtrusive spaniel.

It is hardly surprising that Johnson should have been touched by the fidelity of this queer follower. Boswell, modestly enough, attributes Johnson's easy welcome to his interest in all manifestations of the human mind, and his pleasure in an undisguised display of its workings. The last pleasure was certainly to be obtained in Boswell's society. But in fact Boswell, though his qualities were too much those of the ordinary "good fellow," was not without virtues, and still less without remarkable talents. He was, to all appearance, a man of really generous sympathies, and capable of appreciating proofs of a warm heart and a vigorous understanding. Foolish, vain, and absurd in every way, he was yet a far kinder and more genuine man than many who laughed at him. His singular gifts as an observer could only

escape notice from a careless or inexperienced reader. Boswell has a little of the true Shaksperian secret. He lets his characters show themselves without obtruding unnecessary comment. He never misses the point of a story, though he does not ostentatiously call our attention to it. He gives just what is wanted to indicate character, or to explain the full meaning of a repartee. It is not till we compare his reports with those of less skilful hearers, that we can appreciate the skill with which the essence of a conversation is extracted, and the whole scene indicated by a few telling touches. We are tempted to fancy that we have heard the very thing, and rashly infer that Boswell was simply the mechanical transmitter of the good things uttered. Any one who will try to put down the pith of a brilliant conversation within the same space, may soon satisfy himself of the absurdity of such an hypothesis, and will learn to appreciate Boswell's powers not only of memory but artistic representation. Such a feat implies not only admirable quickness of appreciation, but a rare literary faculty. Boswell's accuracy is remarkable; but it is the least part of his merit.

The book which so faithfully reflects the peculiarities of its hero and its author became the first specimen of a new literary type. Johnson himself was a master in one kind of biography; that which sets forth a condensed and vigorous statement of the essentials of a man's life and character. Other biographers had given excellent memoirs of men considered in relation to the chief historical currents of

the time. But a full-length portrait of a man's domestic life with enough picturesque detail to enable us to see him through the eyes of private friendship did not exist in the language. Boswell's originality and merit may be tested by comparing his book to the ponderous performance of Sir John Hawkins, or to the dreary dissertations, falsely called lives, of which Dugald Stewart's *Life of Robertson* may be taken for a type. The writer is so anxious to be dignified and philosophical that the despairing reader seeks in vain for a single vivid touch, and discovers even the main facts of the hero's life by some indirect allusion. Boswell's example has been more or less followed by innumerable successors; and we owe it in some degree to his example that we have such delightful books as Lockhart's *Life of Scott* or Mr. Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*. Yet no later biographer has been quite as fortunate in a subject; and Boswell remains as not only the first, but the best of his class.

One special merit implies something like genius. Macaulay has given to the usual complaint which distorts the vision of most biographers the name of *lues Boswelliana*. It is true that Boswell's adoration of his hero is a typical example of the feeling. But that which distinguishes Boswell, and renders the phrase unjust, is that in him adoration never hindered accuracy of portraiture. "I will not make my tiger a cat to please anybody," was his answer to well-meaning entreaties of Hannah More to soften his accounts of Johnson's asperities. He saw in-

stinctively that a man who is worth anything loses far more than he gains by such posthumous flattery. The whole picture is toned down, and the lights are depressed as well as the shadows. The truth is that it is unscientific to consider a man as a bundle of separate good and bad qualities, of which one half may be concealed without injury to the rest. Johnson's fits of bad temper, like Goldsmith's blundering, must be unsparingly revealed by a biographer, because they are in fact expressions of the whole character. It is necessary to take them into account in order really to understand either the merits or the shortcomings. When they are softened or omitted, the whole story becomes an enigma, and we are often tempted to substitute some less creditable explanation of errors for the true one. We should not do justice to Johnson's intense tenderness, if we did not see how often it was masked by an irritability pardonable in itself, and not affecting the deeper springs of action. To bring out the beauty of a character by means of its external oddities is the triumph of a kindly humorist; and Boswell would have acted as absurdly in suppressing Johnson's weaknesses, as Sterne would have done had he made Uncle Toby a perfectly sound and rational person. But to see this required an insight so rare that it is wanting in nearly all the biographers who have followed Boswell's steps, and is the most conclusive proof that Boswell was a man of a higher intellectual capacity than has been generally admitted.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF JOHNSON'S LIFE.

IN following Boswell's guidance we have necessarily seen only one side of Johnson's life; and probably that side which had least significance for the man himself.

Boswell saw in him chiefly the great dictator of conversation; and though the reports of Johnson's talk represent his character in spite of some qualifications with unusual fulness, there were many traits very inadequately revealed at the Mitre or the Club, at Mrs. Thrale's, or in meetings with Wilkes or Reynolds. We may catch some glimpses from his letters and diaries of that inward life which consisted generally in a long succession of struggles against an oppressive and often paralysing melancholy. Another most noteworthy side to his character is revealed in his relations to persons too humble for admission to the tables at which he exerted a despot's sway. Upon this side Johnson was almost entirely loveable. We often have to regret the imperfection of the records of

That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.

Everywhere in Johnson's letters and in the occasional anecdotes, we come upon indications of a tenderness and untiring benevolence which would make us forgive far worse faults than have ever been laid to his charge. Nay, the very asperity of the man's outside becomes endeared to us by the association. His irritability never vented itself against the helpless, and his rough impatience of fanciful troubles implied no want of sympathy for real sorrow. One of Mrs. Thrale's anecdotes is intended to show Johnson's harshness:—"When I one day lamented the loss of a first cousin killed in America, 'Pr'ythee, my dear,' said he, 'have done with canting; how would the world be the worse for it, I may ask, if all your relations were at once spitted like larks and roasted for Presto's supper?' Presto was the dog that lay under the table while we talked." The counter version, given by Boswell is, that Mrs. Thrale related her cousin's death in the midst of a hearty supper, and that Johnson, shocked at her want of feeling, said, "Madam, it would give *you* very little concern if all your relations were spitted like those larks, and roasted for Presto's supper." Taking the most unfavorable version, we may judge how much real indifference to human sorrow was implied by seeing how Johnson was affected by a loss of one of his humblest friends. It is but one case of many. In 1767, he took leave, as he notes in his diary, of his "dear old friend, Catherine Chambers," who had been for about forty-three years in the service of his family. "I desired all to with-

draw," he says, "then told her that we were to part for ever, and, as Christians, we should part with prayer, and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me, and held up her poor hands as she lay in bed, with great fervor, while I prayed, kneeling by her, in nearly the following words"—which shall not be repeated here—"I then kissed her," he adds. "She told me that to part was the greatest pain that she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes, and great emotion of kindness, the same hopes. We kissed and parted—I humbly hope to meet again and part no more."

A man with so true and tender a heart could say sincerely, what with some men would be a mere excuse for want of sympathy, that he "hated to hear people whine about metaphysical distresses when there was so much want and hunger in the world." He had a sound and righteous contempt for all affectation of excessive sensibility. Suppose, said Boswell to him, whilst their common friend Baretto was lying under a charge of murder, "that one of your intimate friends were apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged." "I should do what I could," replied Johnson, "to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer." "Would you eat your dinner that day, sir?" asks Boswell. "Yes, sir; and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why there's Baretto, who's to be tried for his life to-

morrow. Friends have risen up for him upon every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind." Boswell illustrated the subject by saying that Tom Davies had just written a letter to Foote, telling him that he could not sleep from concern about Baretti, and at the same time recommending a young man who kept a pickle-shop. Johnson summed up by the remark: "You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*." Johnson never objected to feeling, but to the waste of feeling.

In a similar vein he told Mrs. Thrale that a "surly fellow" like himself had no compassion to spare for "wounds given to vanity and softness," whilst witnessing the common sight of actual want in great cities. On Lady Tavistock's death, said to have been caused by grief for her husband's loss, he observed that her life might have been saved if she had been put into a small chandler's shop, with a child to nurse. When Mrs. Thrale suggested that a lady would be grieved because her friend had lost the chance of a fortune, "She will suffer as much, perhaps," he replied, "as your horse did when your cow miscarried." Mrs. Thrale testifies that he once reproached her sternly for complaining of the dust. When he knew, he said, how many poor families would perish next winter for want of the bread which the drought would deny, he could not bear to hear ladies sighing for rain on account of their complexions

or their clothes. While reporting such sayings, she adds, that he loved the poor as she never saw any one else love them, with an earnest desire to make them happy. His charity was unbounded; he proposed to allow himself one hundred a year out of the three hundred of his pension; but the Thrales could never discover that he really spent upon himself more than 70*l.*, or at most 80*l.* He had numerous dependants, abroad as well as at home, who "did not like to see him latterly, unless he brought 'em money." He filled his pockets with small cash which he distributed to beggars in defiance of political economy. When told that the recipients only laid it out upon gin or tobacco, he replied that it was savage to deny them the few coarse pleasures which the richer disdained. Numerous instances are given of more judicious charity. When, for example, a Benedictine monk, whom he had seen in Paris, became a Protestant, Johnson supported him for some months in London, till he could get a living. Once coming home late at night, he found a poor woman lying in the street. He carried her to his house on his back, and found that she was reduced to the lowest stage of want, poverty, and disease. He took care of her at his own charge, with all tenderness, until she was restored to health, and tried to have her put into a virtuous way of living. His house, in his later years, was filled with various waifs and strays, to whom he gave hospitality and sometimes support, defending himself by saying that if he did not help them nobody else would. The head

of his household was Miss Williams, who had been a friend of his wife's, and after coming to stay with him, in order to undergo an operation for cataract, became a permanent inmate of his house. She had a small income of some 40*l.* a year, partly from the charity of connections of her father's, and partly arising from a little book of miscellanies published by subscription. She was a woman of some sense and cultivation, and when she died (in 1783) Johnson said that for thirty years she had been to him as a sister. Boswell's jealousy was excited during the first period of his acquaintance, when Goldsmith one night went home with Johnson, crying "I go to Miss Williams"—a phrase which implied admission to an intimacy from which Boswell was as yet excluded. Boswell soon obtained the coveted privilege, and testifies to the respect with which Johnson always treated the inmates of his family. Before leaving her to dine with Boswell at the hotel, he asked her what little delicacy should be sent to her from the tavern. Poor Miss Williams, however, was peevish, and, according to Hawkins, had been known to drive Johnson out of the room by her reproaches, and Boswell's delicacy was shocked by the supposition that she tested the fulness of cups of tea, by putting her finger inside. We are glad to know that this was a false impression, and, in fact, Miss Williams, however unfortunate in temper and circumstances, seems to have been a lady by manners and education.

The next inmate of this queer household was Rob-

ert Levett, a man who had been a waiter at a coffee-house in Paris frequented by surgeons. They had enabled him to pick up some of their art, and he set up as an "obscure practiser in physic amongst the lower people" in London. He took from them such fees as he could get, including provisions, sometimes, unfortunately for him, of the potable kind. He was once entrapped into a queer marriage, and Johnson had to arrange a separation from his wife. Johnson, it seems, had a good opinion of his medical skill, and more or less employed his services in that capacity. He attended his patron at his breakfast; breakfasting, said Percy, "on the crust of a roll, which Johnson threw to him after tearing out the crumb." The phrase, it is said, goes too far; Johnson always took pains that Levett should be treated rather as a friend than as a dependant.

Besides these humble friends, there was a Mrs. Desmoulins, the daughter of a Lichfield physician. Johnson had had some quarrel with the father in his youth for revealing a confession of the mental disease which tortured him from early years. He supported Mrs. Desmoulins none the less, giving house-room to her and her daughter, and making her an allowance of half-a-guinea a week, a sum equal to a twelfth part of his pension. Francis Barber has already been mentioned, and we have a dim vision of a Miss Carmichael, who completed what he facetiously called his "seraglio." It was anything but a happy family. He summed up their relations in a letter to Mrs. Thrale. "Williams," he says, "hates

everybody; Levett hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams; Desmoulins hates them both; Poll (Miss Carmichael) loves none of them." Frank Barber complained of Miss Williams's authority, and Miss Williams of Frank's insubordination. Intruders who had taken refuge under his roof, brought their children there in his absence, and grumbled if their dinners were ill-dressed. The old man bore it all, relieving himself by an occasional growl, but reproaching any who ventured to join in the growl for their indifference to the sufferings of poverty. Levett died in January, 1782; Miss Williams died, after a lingering illness, in 1783, and Johnson grieved in solitude for the loss of his testy companions. A poem, composed upon Levett's death, records his feelings in language which wants the refinement of Goldsmith or the intensity of Cowper's pathos, but which is yet so sincere and tender as to be more impressive than far more elegant compositions. It will be a fitting close to this brief indication of one side of Johnson's character, too easily overlooked in Boswell's pages, to quote part of what Thackeray truly calls the "sacred verses" upon Levett:—

Well tried through many a varying year
See Levett to the grave descend,
 Officious, innocent, sincere,
 Of every friendless name the friend.

In misery's darkest cavern known,
His ready help was ever nigh;
Where hopeless anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely want retired to die.

No summons mock'd by dull delay,
No petty gains disdain'd by pride;
The modest wants of every day,
The toil of every day supplied.

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
Nor made a pause, nor left a void ;
And sure the eternal Master found
His single talent well employ'd.

The busy day, the peaceful night,
Unfelt, uncounted, glided by ;
His frame was firm, his eye was bright,
Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then, with no throbs of fiery pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the easiest way.

The last stanza smells somewhat of the country tombstone ; but to read the whole and to realize the deep, manly sentiment which it implies, without tears in one's eyes is to me at least impossible.

There is one little touch which may be added before we proceed to the closing years of this tender-hearted old moralist. Johnson loved little children, calling them "little dears," and cramming them with sweetmeats, though we regret to add that he once snubbed a little child rather severely for a want of acquaintance with the *Pilgrim's Progress*. His cat, Hodge, should be famous amongst the lovers of the race. He used to go out and buy oysters for Hodge, that the servants might not take a dislike to the animal from having to serve it themselves. He re-

proached his wife for beating a cat before the maid, lest she should give a precedent for cruelty. Boswell, who cherished an antipathy for cats, suffered at seeing Hodge scrambling up Johnson's breast, whilst he smiled and rubbed the beast's back and pulled its tail. Bozzy remarked that he was a fine cat. "Why, yes, sir," said Johnson; "but I have had cats whom I liked better than this," and then, lest Hodge should be put out of countenance, he added, "but he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed." He told Langton once of a young gentleman who, when last heard of, was "running about town shooting cats; but," he murmured in a kindly reverie, "Hodge shan't be shot; no, no, Hodge shall not be shot!" Once, when Johnson was staying at a house in Wales, the gardener brought in a hare which had been caught in the potatoes. The order was given to take it to the cook. Johnson asked to have it placed in his arms. He took it to the window and let it go, shouting to increase its speed. When his host complained that he had perhaps spoilt the dinner, Johnson replied by insisting that the rights of hospitality included an animal which had thus placed itself under the protection of the master of the garden.

We must proceed, however, to a more serious event. The year 1781 brought with it a catastrophe which profoundly affected the brief remainder of Johnson's life. Mr. Thrale, whose health had been shaken by fits, died suddenly on the 4th of April. The ultimate consequence was Johnson's loss of the

second home, in which he had so often found refuge from melancholy, alleviation of physical suffering, and pleasure in social converse. The change did not follow at once, but as the catastrophe of a little social drama, upon the rights and wrongs of which a good deal of controversy has been expended.

Johnson was deeply affected by the loss of a friend whose face, as he said, "had never been turned upon him through fifteen years but with respect and benignity." He wrote solemn and affecting letters to the widow, and busied himself strenuously in her service. Thrale had made him one of his executors, leaving him a small legacy; and Johnson took, it seems, a rather simple-minded pleasure in dealing with important commercial affairs and signing cheques for large sums of money. The old man of letters, to whom three hundred a year had been superabundant wealth, was amused at finding himself in the position of a man of business, regulating what was then regarded as a princely fortune. The brewery was sold after a time, and Johnson bustled about with an ink-horn and pen in his button-hole. When asked what was the value of the property, he replied magniloquently, "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice." The brewery was in fact sold to Barclay, Perkins & Co. for the sum of 135,000*l.*, and some years afterwards it was the largest concern of the kind in the world.

The first effect of the change was probably rather to tighten than to relax the bond of union with the

Thrale family. During the winter of 1781-2, Johnson's infirmities were growing upon him. In the beginning of 1782 he was suffering from an illness which excited serious apprehensions, and he went to Mrs. Thrale's, as the only house where he could use "all the freedom that sickness requires." She nursed him carefully, and expressed her feelings with characteristic vehemence in a curious journal which he had encouraged her to keep. It records her opinions about her affairs and her family, with a frankness remarkable even in writing intended for no eye but her own. "Here is Mr. Johnson very ill," she writes on the 1st of February; . . . "What shall we do for him? If I lose *him*, I am more than undone—friend, father, guardian, confidant! God give me health and patience! What shall I do?" There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of these sentiments, though they seem to represent a mood of excitement. They show that for ten months after Thrale's death Mrs. Thrale was keenly sensitive to the value of Johnson's friendship.

A change, however, was approaching. Towards the end of 1780 Mrs. Thrale had made the acquaintance of an Italian musician named Piozzi, a man of amiable and honorable character, making an independent income by his profession, but to the eyes of most people rather inoffensive than specially attractive. The friendship between Mrs. Thrale and Piozzi rapidly became closer, and by the end of 1781 she was on very intimate terms with the gentleman whom she calls "my Piozzi." He had been making a pro-

fessional trip to the Continent during part of the period since her husband's death, and upon his return in November, Johnson congratulated her upon having two friends who loved her, - in terms which suggest no existing feeling of jealousy. During 1782 the mutual affection of the lady and the musician became stronger, and in the autumn they had avowed it to each other, and were discussing the question of marriage.

No one who has had some experience of life will be inclined to condemn Mrs. Thrale for her passion. Rather the capacity for a passion not excited by an intrinsically unworthy object should increase our esteem for her. Her marriage with Thrale had been as has been said, one of convenience; and, though she bore him many children and did her duty faithfully, she never loved him. Towards the end of his life he had made her jealous by very marked attentions to the pretty and sentimental Sophy Streatfield, which once caused a scene at his table; and during the last two years his mind had been weakened, and his conduct had caused her anxiety and discomfort. It is not surprising that she should welcome the warm and simple devotion of her new lover, though she was of a ripe age and the mother of grown-up daughters.

It is, however, equally plain that an alliance with a foreign fiddler was certain to shock British respectability. It is the old story of the quarrel between Philistia and Bohemia. Nor was respectability without much to say for itself. Piozzi was a Catholic

as well as a foreigner; to marry him was in all probability to break with daughters just growing into womanhood, whom it was obviously her first duty to protect. The marriage, therefore, might be regarded as not merely a revolt against conventional morality, but as leading to a desertion of country, religion, and family. Her children, her husband's friends, and her whole circle were certain to look upon the match with feelings of the strongest disapproval, and she admitted to herself that the objections were founded upon something more weighty than a fear of the world's censure.

Johnson, in particular, among whose virtues one cannot reckon a superiority to British prejudice, would inevitably consider the marriage as simply degrading. Foreseeing this, and wishing to avoid the pain of rejecting advice which she felt unable to accept, she refrained from retaining her "friend, father, and guardian" in the position of "confidant." Her situation in the summer of 1782 was therefore exceedingly trying. She was unhappy at home. Her children, she complains, did not love her; her servants "devoured" her; her friends censured her; and her expenses were excessive, whilst the loss of a lawsuit strained her resources. Johnson, sickly, suffering and descending into the gloom of approaching decay, was present like a charged thunder-cloud ready to burst at any moment, if she allowed him to approach the chief subject of her thoughts. Though not in love with Mrs. Thrale, he had a very intelligible feeling of jealousy towards any one who

threatened to distract her allegiance. Under such circumstances we might expect the state of things which Miss Burney described long afterwards (though with some confusion of dates). Mrs. Thrale, she says, was absent and agitated, restless in manner, and hurried in speech, forcing smiles, and averting her eyes from her friends; neglecting every one, including Johnson and excepting only Miss Burney herself, to whom the secret was confided, and the situation therefore explained. Gradually, according to Miss Burney, she became more petulant to Johnson than she was herself aware, gave palpable hints of being worried by his company, and finally excited his resentment and suspicion. In one or two utterances, though he doubtless felt the expedience of reserve, he intrusted his forebodings to Miss Burney, and declared that Streatham was lost to him for ever.

At last, in the end of August, the crisis came. Mrs. Thrale's lawsuit had gone against her. She thought it desirable to go abroad and save money. It had moreover been "long her dearest wish" to see Italy, with Piozzi for a guide. The one difficulty (as she says in her journal at the time), was that it seemed equally hard to part with Johnson or to take him with her till he had regained strength. At last, however she took courage to confide to him her plans for travel. To her extreme annoyance he fully approved of them. He advised her to go; anticipated her return in two or three years; and told her daughter that he should not accompany them, even if invited. No behavior, it may be admitted, could

be more provoking than this unforeseen reasonableness. To nerve oneself to part with a friend, and to find the friend perfectly ready, and all your battery of argument thrown away is most vexatious. The poor man should have begged her to stay with him, or to take him with her; he should have made the scene which she professed to dread, but which would have been the best proof of her power. The only conclusion which could really have satisfied her—though she, in all probability, did not know it—would have been an outburst which would have justified a rupture, and allowed her to protest against his tyranny as she now proceeded to protest against his complacency.

Johnson wished to go to Italy two years later; and his present willingness to be left was probably caused by a growing sense of the dangers which threatened their friendship. Mrs. Thrale's anger appears in her journal. He had never really loved her, she declares; his affection for her had been interested, though even in her wrath she admits that he really loved her husband; he cared less for her conversation, which she had fancied necessary to his existence, than for her "roast beef and plumb pudden," which he now devalues too "dirtily for endurance." She was fully resolved to go, and yet she could not bear that her going should fail to torture the friend whom for eighteen years she had loved and cherished so kindly.

No one has a right at once to insist upon the compliance of his friends, and to insist that it should be a painful compliance. Still Mrs. Thrale's petulant

outburst was natural enough. It requires notice because her subsequent account of the rupture has given rise to attacks on Johnson's character. Her "Anecdotes," written in 1785, show that her real affection for Johnson was still colored by resentment for his conduct at this and a later period. They have an apologetic character which shows itself in a statement as to the origin of the quarrel, curiously different from the contemporary accounts in the diary. She says substantially, and the whole book is written so as to give probability to the assertion, that Johnson's bearishness and demands upon her indulgence had become intolerable, when he was no longer under restraint from her husband's presence. She therefore "took advantage" of her lost lawsuit and other troubles to leave London, and thus escape from his domestic tyranny. He no longer, as she adds, suffered from anything but "old age and general infirmity" (a tolerably wide exception!), and did not require her nursing. She therefore withdrew from the yoke to which she had contentedly submitted during her husband's life, but which was intolerable when her "coadjutor was no more."

Johnson's society was, we may easily believe, very trying to a widow in such a position; and it seems to be true that Thrale was better able than Mrs. Thrale to restrain his oddities, little as the lady shrunk at times from reasonable plain-speaking. But the later account involves something more than a bare suppression of the truth. The excuse about his health is, perhaps, the worst part of her case, because

obviously insincere. Nobody could be more fully aware than Mrs. Thrale that Johnson's infirmities were rapidly gathering, and that another winter or two must in all probability be fatal to him. She knew, therefore, that he was never more in want of the care which, as she seems to imply, had saved him from the specific tendency to something like madness. She knew, in fact, that she was throwing him upon the care of his other friends, zealous and affectionate enough, it is true, but yet unable to supply him with the domestic comforts of Streatham. She clearly felt that this was a real injury, inevitable it might be under the circumstances, but certainly not to be extenuated by the paltry evasion as to his improved health. So far from Johnson's health being now established, she had not dared to speak until his temporary recovery from a dangerous illness, which had provoked her at the time to the strongest expressions of anxious regret. She had (according to the diary) regarded a possible breaking of the yoke in the early part of 1782 as a terrible evil, which would "more than ruin her." Even when resolved to leave Streatham, her one great difficulty is the dread of parting with Johnson, and the pecuniary troubles are the solid and conclusive reason. In the later account the money question is the mere pretext; the desire to leave Johnson the true motive; and the long-cherished desire to see Italy with Piozzi is judiciously dropped out of notice altogether.

The truth is plain enough. Mrs. Thrale was torn by conflicting feelings. She still loved Johnson, and

yet dreaded his certain disapproval of her strongest wishes. She respected him, but was resolved not to follow his advice. She wished to treat him with kindness and to be repaid with gratitude, and yet his presence and his affection were full of intolerable inconveniences. When an old friendship becomes a burden, the smaller infirmities of manner and temper to which we once submitted willingly, become intolerable. She had borne with Johnson's modes of eating and with his rough reproofs to herself and her friends during sixteen years of her married life; and for nearly a year of her widowhood she still clung to him as the wisest and kindest of monitors. His manners had undergone no spasmodic change. They became intolerable when, for other reasons, she resented his possible interference, and wanted a very different guardian and confidant; and, therefore, she wished to part, and yet wished that the initiative should come from him.

The decision to leave Streatham was taken. Johnson parted with deep regret from the house; he read a chapter of the Testament in the library; he took leave of the church with a kiss; he composed a prayer commending the family to the protection of Heaven; and he did not forget to note in his journal the details of the last dinner of which he partook. This quaint observation may have been due to some valetudinary motive, or, more probably, to some odd freak of association. Once, when eating an omelette, he was deeply affected because it recalled his old friend Nugent. "Ah, my dear friend," he said

"in an agony," "I shall never eat omelette with thee again!" And in the present case there is an obscure reference to some funeral connected in his mind with a meal. The unlucky entry has caused some ridicule, but need hardly convince us that his love of the family in which for so many years he had been an honored and honor-giving inmate was, as Miss Seward amiably suggests, in great measure "kitchen-love."

No immediate rupture followed the abandonment of the Streatham establishment. Johnson spent some weeks at Brighton with Mrs. Thrale, during which a crisis was taking place, without his knowledge, in her relations to Piozzi. After vehement altercations with her daughters, whom she criticizes with great bitterness for their utter want of heart, she resolved to break with Piozzi for at least a time. Her plan was to go to Bath, and there to retrench her expenses, in the hopes of being able to recall her lover at some future period. Meanwhile he left her and returned to Italy. After another winter in London, during which Johnson was still a frequent inmate of her house, she went to Bath with her daughters in April, 1783. A melancholy period followed for both the friends. Mrs. Thrale lost a younger daughter, and Johnson had a paralytic stroke in June. Death was sending preliminary warnings. A correspondence was kept up, which implies that the old terms were not ostensibly broken. Mrs. Thrale speaks tartly more than once; and Johnson's letters go into medical details with his

customary plainness of speech, and he occasionally indulges in laments over the supposed change in her feelings. The gloom is thickening, and the old playful gallantry has died out. The old man evidently felt himself deserted, and suffered from the breaking-up of the asylum he had loved so well. The final catastrophe came in 1784, less than six months before Johnson's death.

After much suffering in mind and body, Mrs. Thrale had at last induced her daughters to consent to her marriage with Piozzi. She sent for him at once, and they were married in June, 1784. A painful correspondence followed. Mrs. Thrale announced her marriage in a friendly letter to Johnson, excusing her previous silence on the ground that discussion could only have caused them pain. The revelation, though Johnson could not have been quite unprepared, produced one of his bursts of fury. "Madam, if I interpret your letter rightly," wrote the old man, "you are ignominiously married. If it is yet undone, let us once more talk together. If you have abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive your wickedness! If you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do no further mischief! If the last act is yet to do, I, who have loved you, esteemed you, revered you, and served you—I, who long thought you the first of womankind—entreat that before your fate is irrevocable, I may once more see you! I was, I once was, madam, most truly yours, Sam. Johnson."

Mrs. Thrale replied with spirit and dignity to this

cry of blind indignation, speaking of her husband with becoming pride, and resenting the unfortunate phrase about her loss of "fame." She ended by declining further intercourse till Johnson could change his opinion of Piozzi. Johnson admitted in his reply that he had no right to resent her conduct; expressed his gratitude for the kindness which had "soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched," and implored her ("superfluously," as she says) to induce Piozzi to settle in England. He then took leave of her with an expression of sad forebodings. Mrs. Thrale, now Mrs. Piozzi, says that she replied affectionately; but the letter is missing. The friendship was broken off, and during the brief remainder of Johnson's life, the Piozzis were absent from England.

Of her there is little more to be said. After passing some time in Italy, where she became a light of that wretched little Della Cruscan society of which some faint memory is preserved by Gifford's ridicule, now pretty nearly forgotten with its objects, she returned with her husband to England. Her anecdotes of Johnson, published soon after his death, had a success which, in spite of much ridicule, encouraged her to some further literary efforts of a sprightly but ephemeral kind. She lived happily with Piozzi, and never had cause to regret her marriage. She was reconciled to her daughters sufficiently to renew a friendly intercourse; but the elder ones set up a separate establishment. Piozzi died not long afterwards. She was still a vivacious old lady, who celebrated her 80th birthday by a ball, and is supposed at

that ripe age to have made an offer of marriage to a young actor. She died in May, 1821, leaving all that she could dispose of to a nephew of Piozzi's, who had been naturalised in England.

Meanwhile Johnson was rapidly approaching the grave. His old inmates, Levett and Miss Williams, had gone before him; Goldsmith and Garrick and Beauclerk had become memories of the past; and the gloom gathered thickly around him. The old man clung to life with pathetic earnestness. Though life had been often melancholy, he never affected to conceal the horror with which he regarded death. He frequently declared that death must be dreadful to every reasonable man. "Death, my dear, is very dreadful," he says simply in a letter to Lucy Porter in the last year of his life. Still later he shocked a pious friend by admitting that the fear oppressed him. Dr. Adams tried the ordinary consolation of the divine goodness, and went so far as to suggest that hell might not imply much positive suffering. Johnson's religious views were of a different color. "I am afraid," he said, "I may be one of those who shall be damned." "What do you mean by damned?" asked Adams. Johnson replied passionately and loudly, "Sent to hell, sir, and punished everlastingly." Remonstrances only deepened his melancholy, and he silenced his friends by exclaiming in gloomy agitation, "I'll have no more on't!" Often in these last years he was heard muttering to himself the passionate complaint of Claudio, "Ah, but to die and go we know not

whither!" At other times he was speaking of some lost friend, and saying, "Poor man—and then he died!" The peculiar horror of death, which seems to indicate a tinge of insanity, was combined with utter fearlessness of pain. He called to the surgeons to cut deeper when performing a painful operation, and shortly before his death inflicted such wounds upon himself in hopes of obtaining relief as, very erroneously, to suggest the idea of suicide. Whilst his strength remained, he endeavored to disperse melancholy by some of the old methods. In the winter of 1783-4 he got together the few surviving members of the old Ivy Lane Club, which had flourished when he was composing the *Dictionary*; but the old place of meeting had vanished, most of the original members were dead, and the gathering can have been but melancholy. He started another club at the Essex Head, whose members were to meet twice a week, with the modest fine of three-pence for non-attendance. It appears to have included a rather "strange mixture" of people, and thereby to have given some scandal to Sir John Hawkins and even to Reynolds. They thought that his craving for society, increased by his loss of Streatham, was leading him to undignified concessions.

Amongst the members of the club, however, were such men as Horsley and Windham. Windham seems to have attracted more personal regard than most politicians, by a generous warmth of enthusiasm not too common in the class. In politics he was an

ardent disciple of Burke's, whom he afterwards followed in his separation from the new Whigs. But, though adhering to the principles which Johnson detested, he knew, like his preceptor, how to win Johnson's warmest regard. He was the most eminent of the younger generation who now looked up to Johnson as a venerable relic from the past. Another was young Burke, that very priggish and silly young man as he seems to have been, whose loss, none the less, broke the tender heart of his father. Friendships, now more interesting, were those with two of the most distinguished authoresses of the day. One of them was Hannah More, who was about this time coming to the conclusion that the talents which had gained her distinction in the literary and even in the dramatic world, should be consecrated to less secular employment. Her vivacity during the earlier years of their acquaintance exposed her to an occasional rebuff. "She does not gain upon me, sir; I think her empty-headed," was one of his remarks; and it was to her that he said, according to Mrs. Thrale, though Boswell reports a softened version of the remark, that she should "consider what her flattery was worth, before she choked him with it." More frequently, he seems to have repaid it in kind. "There was no name in poetry," he said, "which might not be glad to own her poem"—the *Bas Bleu*. Certainly Johnson did not stick at trifles in intercourse with his female friends. He was delighted, shortly before his death, to "gallant it about" with her at

Oxford, and in serious moments showed a respectful regard for her merits. Hannah More, who thus sat at the feet of Johnson, encouraged the juvenile ambition of Macaulay, and did not die till the historian had grown into manhood and fame. The other friendship noticed was with Fanny Burney, who also lived to our own time. Johnson's affection for this daughter of his friend seems to have been amongst the tenderest of his old age. When she was first introduced to him at the Thrales, she was overpowered and indeed had her head a little turned by flattery of the most agreeable kind that an author can receive. The "great literary Leviathan" showed himself to have the recently published *Evelina* at his fingers' ends. He quoted, and almost acted passages. "La! Polly!" he exclaimed in a pert feminine accent, "only think! Miss has danced with a lord!" How many modern readers can assign its place to that quotation, or answer the question which poor Boswell asked in despair and amidst general ridicule for his ignorance, "What is a Brangton?" There is something pleasant in the enthusiasm with which men like Johnson and Burke welcomed the literary achievements of the young lady, whose first novels seem to have made a sensation almost as lively as that produced by Miss Brontë, and far superior to anything that fell to the lot of Miss Austen. Johnson seems always to have regarded her with personal affection. He had a tender interview with her shortly before his death; he begged her with solemn energy to remember him in her

prayers ; he apologized pathetically for being unable to see her, as his weakness increased ; and sent her tender messages from his deathbed.

As the end drew near, Johnson accepted the inevitable like a man. After spending most of the latter months of 1784 in the country with the friends who, after the loss of the Thrales, could give him most domestic comfort, he came back to London to die. He made his will, and settled a few matters of business, and was pleased to be told that he would be buried in Westminster Abbey. He uttered a few words of solemn advice to those who came near him, and took affecting leave of his friends. Langton, so warmly loved, was in close attendance. Johnson said to him tenderly, *Te teneam moriens deficiente manu*. Windham broke from political occupations to sit by the dying man. Once Langton found Burke sitting by his bedside with three or four friends. "I am afraid," said Burke, "that so many of us must be oppressive to you." "No, sir, it is not so," replied Johnson, "and I must be in a wretched state indeed when your company would not be a delight to me." "My dear sir," said Burke, with a breaking voice, "you have always been too good to me ;" and parted from his old friend for the last time. Of Reynolds, he begged three things : to forgive a debt of thirty pounds, to read the Bible, and never to paint on Sundays. A few flashes of the old humor broke through. He said of a man who sat up with him : "Sir, the fellow's an idiot ; he's as awkward as a turnspit when first put into the wheel, and

as sleepy as a dormouse." His last recorded words were to a young lady who had begged for his blessing: "God bless you, my dear." The same day, December 13th, 1784, he gradually sank and died peacefully. He was laid in the Abbey, and the playful prediction which he made to Goldsmith has been amply fulfilled:—

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.

The names of many greater writers are inscribed upon the walls of Westminster Abbey; but scarcely any one lies there whose heart was more acutely responsive during life to the deepest and tenderest of human emotions. In visiting that strange gathering of departed heroes and statesmen and philanthropists and poets, there are many whose words and deeds have a far greater influence upon our imaginations; but there are very few whom when all has been said, we can love so heartily as Samuel Johnson.

CHAPTER V.

JOHNSON'S WRITINGS.

IT remains to speak of Johnson's position in literature. For reasons sufficiently obvious, few men whose lives have been devoted to letters for an equal period, have left behind them such scanty and inadequate remains. Johnson, as we have seen, worked only under the pressure of circumstances; a very small proportion of his latter life was devoted to literary employment. The working hours of his earlier years were spent for the most part in productions which can hardly be called literary. Seven years were devoted to the *Dictionary*, which, whatever its merits, could be a book only in the material sense of the word, and was of course destined to be soon superseded. Much of his hack-work has doubtless passed into oblivion, and though the ordinary relic-worship has gathered together fragments enough to fill twelve decent octavo volumes (to which may be added the two volumes of parliamentary reports), the part which can be called alive may be compressed into very moderate compass. Johnson may be considered as a poet, an essayist, a pamphleteer, a traveller, a critic, and a biographer. Among his poems, the two imitations of Juvenal, especially the

Vanity of Human Wishes, and a minor fragment or two, probably deserve more respect than would be conceded to them by adherents of modern schools. His most ambitious work, *Irene*, can be read by men in whom a sense of duty has been abnormally developed. Among the two hundred and odd essays of the *Rambler*, there is a fair proportion which will deserve, but will hardly obtain, respectful attention. *Rasselas*, one of the philosophical tales popular in the last century, gives the essence of much of the *Rambler* in a different form, and to these may be added the essay upon Soame Jenyns, which deals with the same absorbing question of human happiness. The political pamphlets, and the *Journey to the Hebrides*, have a certain historical interest; but are otherwise readable only in particular passages. Much of his criticism is pretty nearly obsolete; but the child of his old age—the *Lives of the Poets*—a book in which criticism and biography are combined, is an admirable performance in spite of serious defects. It is the work that best reflects his mind, and intelligent readers who have once made its acquaintance, will be apt to turn it into a familiar companion.

If it is easy to assign the causes which limited the quantity of Johnson's work, it is more curious to inquire what was the quality which once gained for it so much authority, and which now seems to have so far lost its savor. The peculiar style which is associated with Johnson's name must count for something in both processes. The mannerism is strongly marked, and of course offensive; for by "mannerism,"

as I understand the word, is meant the repetition of certain forms of language in obedience to blind habit and without reference to their propriety in the particular case. Johnson's sentences seem to be contorted, as his gigantic limbs used to twitch, by a kind of mechanical spasmodic action. The most obvious peculiarity is the tendency which he noticed himself, to "use too big words and too many of them." He had to explain to Miss Reynolds that the Shakesperian line,—

You must borrow me Garagantua's mouth,

had been applied to him because he used "big words, which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them." It was not, however, the mere bigness of the words that distinguished his style, but a peculiar love of putting the abstract for the concrete, of using awkward inversions, and of balancing his sentences in a monotonous rhythm, which gives the appearance, as it sometimes corresponds to the reality, of elaborate logical discrimination. With all its faults the style has the merits of masculine directness. The inversions are not such as to complicate the construction. As Boswell remarks, he never uses a parenthesis; and his style, though ponderous and wearisome, is as transparent as the smarter snip-snap of Macaulay.

This singular mannerism appears in his earliest writings; it is most marked at the time of the *Ram-ler*; whilst in the *Lives of the Poets*, although I think that the trick of inversion has become com-

moner, the other peculiarities have been so far softened as (in my judgment, at least), to be inoffensive. It is perhaps needless to give examples of a tendency which marks almost every page of his writing. A passage or two from the *Rambler* may illustrate the quality of the style, and the oddity of the effect produced, when it is applied to topics of a trivial kind. The author of the *Rambler* is supposed to receive a remonstrance upon his excessive gravity from the lively Flirtilla, who wishes him to write in defence of masquerades. Conscious of his own incapacity, he applies to a man of "high reputation in gay life;" who, on the fifth perusal of Flirtilla's letter breaks into a rapture, and declares that he is ready to devote himself to her service. Here is part of the apostrophe put into the mouth of this brilliant rake. "Behold, Flirtilla, at thy feet a man grown gray in the study of those noble arts by which right and wrong may be confounded; by which reason may be blinded, when we have a mind to escape from her inspection, and caprice and appetite instated in uncontrolled command and boundless dominion! Such a casuist may surely engage with certainty of success in vindication of an entertainment which in an instant gives confidence to the timorous and kindles ardor in the cold, an entertainment where the vigilance of jealousy has so often been clouded, and the virgin is set free from the necessity of languishing in silence; where all the outworks of chastity are at once demolished; where the heart is laid open without a blush; where bashful-

ness may survive virtue, and no wish is crushed under the frown of modesty."

Here is another passage, in which Johnson is speaking upon a topic more within his proper province ; and which contains sound sense under its weight of words. A man, he says, who reads a printed book, is often contented to be pleased without critical examination. "But," he adds, "if the same man be called to consider the merit of a production yet unpublished, he brings an imagination heated with objections to passages which he has never yet heard ; he invokes all the powers of criticism and stores his memory with Taste and Grace, Purity and Delicacy, Manners and Unities, sounds which having been once uttered by those that understood them, have been since re-echoed without meaning, and kept up to the disturbance of the world by constant repercussion from one coxcomb to another. He considers himself as obliged to show by some proof of his abilities, that he is not consulted to no purpose, and therefore watches every opening for objection, and looks round for every opportunity to propose some specious alteration. Such opportunities a very small degree of sagacity will enable him to find, for in every work of imagination, the disposition of parts, the insertion of incidents, and use of decorations may be varied in a thousand ways with equal propriety ; and, as in things nearly equal that will always seem best to every man which he himself produces, the critic, whose business is only to propose without the care of execution, can never want

the satisfaction of believing that he has suggested very important improvements, nor the power of enforcing his advice by arguments, which, as they appear convincing to himself, either his kindness or his vanity will press obstinately and importunately, without suspicion that he may possibly judge too hastily in favour of his own advice or inquiry whether the advantage of the new scheme be proportionate to the labor." We may still notice a "repercussion" of words from one coxcomb to another; though somehow the words have been changed or translated.

Johnson's style is characteristic of the individual and of the epoch. The preceding generation had exhibited the final triumph of common sense over the pedantry of a decaying scholasticism. The movements represented by Locke's philosophy, by the rationalizing school in theology, and by the so-called classicism of Pope and his followers, are different phases of the same impulse. The quality valued above all others in philosophy, literature, and art was clear, bright, common sense. To expel the mystery which had served as a cloak for charlatans was the great aim of the time, and the method was to appeal from the professors of exploded technicalities to the judgment of cultivated men of the world. Berkeley places his Utopia in happy climes,—

Where nature guides, and virtue rules,
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
The pedantry of courts and schools.

Simplicity, clearness, directness are, therefore, the

great virtues of thought and style. Berkeley, Addison, Pope, and Swift are the great models of such excellence in various departments of literature.

In the succeeding generation we become aware of a certain leaven of dissatisfaction with the æsthetic and intellectual code thus inherited. The supremacy of common sense, the superlative importance of clearness, is still fully acknowledged, but there is a growing undertone of dissent in form and substance. Attempts are made to restore philosophical conceptions assailed by Locke and his followers; the rationalism of the deistic or semi-deistic writers is declared to be superficial; their optimistic theories disregard the dark side of nature, and provide no sufficient utterance for the sadness caused by the contemplation of human suffering; and the polished monotony of Pope's verses begins to fall upon those who shall tread in his steps. Some daring sceptics are even inquiring whether he is a poet at all. And simultaneously, though Addison is still a kind of sacred model, the best prose writers are beginning to aim at a more complex structure of sentence, fitted for the expression of a wider range of thought and emotion.

Johnson, though no conscious revolutionist, shares this growing discontent. The *Spectator* is written in the language of the drawing-room and the coffee-house. Nothing is ever said which might not pass in conversation between a couple of "wits," with, at most, some graceful indulgence in passing moods of solemn or tender sentiment. Johnson, though devoted to society in his own way, was any-

thing but a producer of small talk. Society meant to him an escape from the gloom which beset him whenever he was abandoned to his thoughts. Neither his education nor the manners acquired in Grub Street had qualified him to be an observer of those lighter foibles which were touched by Addison with so dexterous a hand. When he ventures upon such topics he flounders dreadfully, and rather reminds us of an artist who should attempt to paint miniatures with a mop. No man, indeed, took more of interest in what is called the science of human nature ; and, when roused by the stimulus of argument, he could talk, as has been shown, with almost unrivalled vigor and point. But his favorite topics are the deeper springs of character, rather than superficial peculiarities ; and his vigorous sayings are concentrated essence of strong sense and deep feeling, not dainty epigrams or graceful embodiments of delicate observation. Johnson was not, like some contemporary antiquarians, a systematic student of the English literature of the preceding centuries, but he had a strong affection for some of its chief masterpieces. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was, he declared, the only book which ever got him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished. Sir Thomas Browne was another congenial writer, who is supposed to have had some influence upon his style. He never seems to have directly imitated any one, though some nonsense has been talked about his "forming a style ;" but it is probable that he felt a closer affinity to those old scholars, with their elaborate and ornate

language and their deep and solemn tone of sentiment, than to the brilliant but comparatively superficial writers of Queen Anne's time. He was, one may say, a scholar of the old type, forced by circumstances upon the world, but always retaining a sympathy for the scholar's life and temper. Accordingly, his style acquired something of the old elaboration, though the attempt to conform to the canons of a later age renders the structure disagreeably monotonous. His tendency to pomposity is not redeemed by the *naïveté* and spontaneity of his masters.

The inferiority of Johnson's written to his spoken utterances is indicative of his divided life. There are moments at which his writing takes the terse, vigorous tone of his talk. In his letters, such as those to Chesterfield and Macpherson and in occasional passages of his pamphlets, we see that he could be pithy enough when he chose to descend from his Latinized abstractions to good concrete English; but that is only when he becomes excited. His face when in repose, we are told, appeared to be almost imbecile; he was constantly sunk in reveries, from which he was only roused by a challenge to conversation. In his writings, for the most part, we seem to be listening to the reverie rather than the talk; we are overhearing a soliloquy in his study, not a vigorous discussion over the twentieth cup of tea; he is not fairly put upon his mettle, and is content to expound without enforcing. We seem to see a man, heavy-eyed, ponderous in his gestures, like some huge mechanism

which grinds out a ponderous tissue of verbiage as heavy as it is certainly solid.

The substance corresponds to the style. Johnson has something in common with the fashionable pessimism of modern times. No sentimentalist of to-day could be more convinced that life is in the main miserable. It was his favorite theory, according to Mrs. Thrale, that all human action was prompted by the "vacuity of life." Men act solely in the hope of escaping from themselves. Evil, as a follower of Schopenhauer would assert, is the positive, and good merely the negative of evil. All desire is at bottom an attempt to escape from pain. The doctrine neither resulted from, nor generated, a philosophical theory in Johnson's case, and was in the main a generalization of his own experience. Not the less, the aim of most of his writing is to express this sentiment in one form or other. He differs, indeed, from most modern sentimentalists, in having the most hearty contempt for useless whining. If he dwells upon human misery it is because he feels that it is as futile to join with the optimist in ignoring, as with the pessimist in howling over the evil. We are in a sad world, full of pain, but we have to make the best of it. Stubborn patience and hard work are the sole remedies, or rather the sole means of temporary escape. Much of the *Rambler* is occupied with variations upon this theme, and expresses the kind of dogged resolution with which he would have us plod through this weary world. Take for example this passage:—"The controversy about the reality of external evils is now

at an end. That life has many miseries, and that those miseries are sometimes at least equal to all the powers of fortitude is now universally confessed; and, therefore, it is useful to consider not only how we may escape them, but by what means those which either the accidents of affairs or the infirmities of nature must bring upon us may be mitigated and lightened, and how we may make those hours less wretched which the condition of our present existence will not allow to be very happy.

“The cure for the greatest part of human miseries is not radical, but palliative. Infelicity is involved in corporeal nature, and interwoven with our being; all attempts, therefore, to decline it wholly are useless and vain; the armies of pain send their arrows against us on every side, the choice is only between those which are more or less sharp, or tinged with poison of greater or less malignity; and the strongest armor which reason can supply will only blunt their points, but cannot repel them.

“The great remedy which Heaven has put in our hands is patience, by which, though we cannot lessen the torments of the body, we can in a great measure preserve the peace of the mind, and shall suffer only the natural and genuine force of an evil, without heightening its acrimony or prolonging its effects.”

It is hardly desirable for a moralist to aim at originality in his precepts. We must be content if he enforces old truths in such a manner as to convince us of the depth and sincerity of his feeling. Johnson, it must be confessed, rather abuses the moralist's

privilege of being commonplace. He descants not unfrequently upon propositions so trite that even the most earnest enforcement can give them little interest. With all drawbacks, however, the moralizing is the best part of the *Rambler*. Many of the papers follow the precedent set by Addison in the *Spectator*, but without Addison's felicity. Like Addison, he indulges in allegory, which, in his hands, becomes unendurably frigid and clumsy; he tries light social satire, and is fain to confess that we can spy a beard under the muffler of his feminine characters; he treats us to criticism which, like Addison's goes upon exploded principles, but unlike Addison's, is apt to be almost wilfully outrageous. His odd remarks upon Milton's versification are the worst example of this weakness. The result is what one might expect from the attempt of a writer without an ear to sit in judgment upon the greatest master of harmony in the language.

These defects have consigned the *Rambler* to the dustiest shelves of libraries, and account for the wonder expressed by such a critic as M. Taine at the English love of Johnson. Certainly if that love were nourished, as he seems to fancy, by assiduous study of the *Rambler*, it would be a curious phenomenon. And yet with all its faults, the reader who can plod through its pages will at least feel respect for the author. It is not unworthy of the man whose great lesson is "clear your mind of cant;"¹ who felt most

¹ Of this well-known sentiment it may be said, as of some other familiar quotations, that its direct meaning has been slightly modified in use. The emphasis is changed. John-

deeply the misery of the world, but from the bottom of his heart despised querulous and sentimental complaints on one side, and optimist glasses upon the other. To him, as to some others of his temperament, the affectation of looking at the bright side of things seems to have presented itself as the bitterest of mockeries; and nothing would tempt him to let fine words pass themselves off for genuine sense. Here are some remarks upon the vanity in which some authors seek for consolation, which may illustrate this love of realities and conclude our quotations from the *Rambler*.

“By such acts of voluntary delusion does every man endeavor to conceal his own unimportance from himself. It is long before we are convinced of the small proportion which every individual bears to the collective body of mankind; or learn how few can be interested in the fortune of any single man; how little vacancy is left in the world for any new object of attention; to how small extent the brightest blaze of merit can be spread amidst the mists of business and of folly; and how soon it is clouded by the intervention of other novelties. Not only the writer of books, but the commander of armies, and the deliverer of nations, will easily outlive all noisy and popular reputation: he may be celebrated

son's words were “Clear your *mind* of cant. You may talk as other people do; you may say to a man, sir, I am your humble servant; you are *not* his most humble servant. . . . You may *talk* in this manner; it is a mode of talking in society; but don't *think* foolishly.”

for a time by the public voice, but his actions and his name will soon be considered as remote and unaffecting, and be rarely mentioned but by those whose alliance gives them some vanity to gratify by frequent commemoration. It seems not to be sufficiently considered how little renown can be admitted in the world. Mankind are kept perpetually busy by their fears or desires, and have not more leisure from their own affairs than to acquaint themselves with the accidents of the current day. Engaged in contriving some refuge from calamity, or in shortening their way to some new possession, they seldom suffer their thoughts to wander to the past or future; none but a few solitary students have leisure to inquire into the claims of ancient heroes or sages; and names which hoped to range over kingdoms and continents shrink at last into cloisters and colleges. Nor is it certain that even of these dark and narrow habitations, these last retreats of fame, the possession will be long kept. Of men devoted to literature very few extend their views beyond some particular science, and the greater part seldom inquire, even in their own profession, for any authors but those whom the present mode of study happens to force upon their notice; they desire not to fill their minds with unfashionable knowledge, but contentedly resign to oblivion those books which they now find censured or neglected."

The most remarkable of Johnson's utterances upon his favorite topic of the Vanity of Human Wishes is the story of *Rasselas*. The plan of the book is

simple, and recalls certain parts of Voltaire's simultaneous but incomparably more brilliant attack upon Optimism in *Candide*. There is supposed to be a happy valley in Abyssinia where the royal princes are confined in total seclusion, but with ample supplies for every conceivable want. Rasselas, who has been thus educated, becomes curious as to the outside world, and at last makes his escape with his sister, her attendant, and the ancient sage and poet, Imlac. Under Imlac's guidance they survey life and manners in various stations; they make the acquaintance of philosophers, statesmen, men of the world, and recluses; they discuss the results of their experience pretty much in the style of the *Rambler*; they agree to pronounce the sentence "Vanity of Vanities!" and finally, in a "conclusion where nothing is concluded," they resolve to return to the happy valley. The book is little more than a set of essays upon life, with just story enough to hold it together. It is wanting in those brilliant flashes of epigram, which illustrate Voltaire's pages so as to blind some readers to its real force of sentiment, and yet it leaves a peculiar and powerful impression upon the reader.

The general tone may be collected from a few passages. Here is a fragment, the conclusion of which is perhaps the most familiar of quotations from Johnson's writings. Imlac in narrating his life describes his attempts to become a poet.

"The business of a poet," said Imlac, "is to examine not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he

does not number the streaks of the tulip or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features as recall the original to every mind ; and must neglect the minute discriminations which one may have remarked, and another have neglected for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness."

" But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet ; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition ; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and know the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions, and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondency of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country ; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state ; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same ; he must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name ; contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations, as a being superior to time and place.

" His labors are not yet at an end ; he must know

many languages and many sciences; and that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must by incessant practice familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony."

Imlac now felt the enthusiastic fit and was proceeding to aggrandize his profession, when the prince cried out, "Enough, thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet."

Indeed, Johnson's conception of poetry is not the one which is now fashionable, and which would rather seem to imply that philosophical power and moral sensibility are so far disqualifications to the true poet.

Here, again, is a view of the superfine system of moral philosophy. A meeting of learned men is discussing the ever-recurring problem of happiness, and one of them speaks as follows:—

"The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire; he will receive and reject with equability of temper, and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions or intricate ratiocinations. Let him learn to be wise by easier means: let him observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove; let him consider the

life of animals whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide and are happy.

“Let us, therefore, at length cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, that deviation from nature is deviation from happiness.”

The prince modestly inquires what is the precise meaning of the advice just given.

“When I find young men so humble and so docile,” said the philosopher, “I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects, to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things.

“The prince soon found that this was one of the sages, whom he should understand less as he heard him longer.”

Here, finally, is a characteristic reflection upon the right mode of meeting sorrow.

“The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity,” said Imlac, “is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled; yet a new day suc-

ceeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But as they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation.

“Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye, and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion; commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favorite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation.”

In one respect *Rasselas* is curiously contrasted with *Candide*. Voltaire's story is aimed at the doctrine of theological optimism, and, whether that doctrine be well or ill understood, has therefore an openly sceptical tendency. Johnson, to whom nothing could be more abhorrent than an alliance with any assailant of orthodoxy, draws no inference from his pessimism. He is content to state the fact of human misery without perplexing himself with the resulting problem as to the final cause of human existence. If the question had been explicitly brought before him, he would, doubtless, have replied that the mystery was insoluble. To answer either in the sceptical or the

optimistic sense was equally presumptuous. Johnson's religious beliefs in fact were not such as to suggest that kind of comfort which is to be obtained by explaining away the existence of evil. If he, too, would have said that in some sense all must be for the best in a world ruled by a perfect Creator, the sense must be one which would allow of the eternal misery of indefinite multitudes of his creatures.

But, in truth, it was characteristic of Johnson to turn away his mind from such topics. He was interested in ethical speculations, but on the practical side, in the application to life, not in the philosophy on which it might be grounded. In that direction he could see nothing but a "milking of the bull"—a fruitless or rather a pernicious waste of intellect. An intense conviction of the supreme importance of a moral guidance in this difficult world, made him abhor any rash inquiries by which the basis of existing authority might be endangered.

This sentiment is involved in many of those prejudices which have been so much, and in some sense justifiably ridiculed. Man has been wretched and foolish since the race began, and will be till it ends; one chorus of lamentation has ever been rising, in countless dialects but with a single meaning; the plausible schemes of philosophers give no solution to the everlasting riddle; the nostrums of politicians touch only the surface of the deeply-rooted evil; it is folly to be querulous, and as silly to fancy that men are growing worse, as that they are much better than they used to be. The evils under which we suffer

are not skin-deep, to be eradicated by changing the old physicians for new quacks. What is to be done under such conditions, but to hold fast as vigorously as we can to the rules of life and faith which have served our ancestors, and which, whatever their justifications, are at least the only consolation, because they supply the only guidance through this labyrinth of troubles? Macaulay has ridiculed Johnson for what he takes to be the ludicrous inconsistency of his intense political prejudice, combined with his assertion of the indifference of all forms of government. "If," says Macaulay, "the difference between two forms of government be not worth half a guinea, it is not easy to see how Whiggism can be viler than Toryism, or the Crown can have too little power." The answer is surely obvious. Whiggism is vile, according to the doctor's phrase, because Whiggism is a "negation of all principle;" it is in his view, not so much the preference of one form to another, as an attack upon the vital condition of all government. He called Burke a "bottomless Whig" in this sense, implying that Whiggism meant anarchy; and in the next generation a good many people were led, rightly or wrongly, to agree with him by the experience of the French revolution.

This dogged conservatism has both its value and its grotesque side. When Johnson came to write political pamphlets in his later years, and to deal with subjects little familiar to his mind, the results were grotesque enough. Loving authority, and holding one authority to be as good as another, he

defended with uncompromising zeal the most preposterous and tyrannical measures. The pamphlets against the Wilkite agitators and the American rebels are little more than a huge "rhinoceros" snort of contempt against all who are fools enough or wicked enough to promote war and disturbance in order to change one form of authority for another. Here is a characteristic passage, giving his view of the value of such demonstrators:—

"The progress of a petition is well known. An ejected placeman goes down to his county or his borough, tells his friends of his inability to serve them and his constituents, of the corruption of the government. His friends readily understand that he who can get nothing, will have nothing to give. They agree to proclaim a meeting. Meat and drink are plentifully provided, a crowd is easily brought together, and those who think that they know the reason of the meeting undertake to tell those who know it not. Ale and clamor unite their powers; the crowd, condensed and heated, begins to ferment with the leaven of sedition. All see a thousand evils, though they cannot show them, and grow impatient for a remedy, though they know not what.

"A speech is then made by the Cicero of the day; he says much and suppresses more, and credit is equally given to what he tells and what he conceals. The petition is heard and universally approved. Those who are sober enough to write, add their names, and the rest would sign it if they could.

"Every man goes home and tells his neighbor of

the glories of the day; how he was consulted, and what he advised; how he was invited into the great room, where his lordship caressed him by his name; how he was caressed by Sir Francis, Sir Joseph, and Sir George; how he ate turtle and venison, and drank unanimity to the three brothers.

“The poor loiterer, whose shop had confined him or whose wife had locked him up, hears the tale of luxury with envy, and at last inquires what was their petition. Of the petition nothing is remembered by the narrator, but that it spoke much of fears and apprehensions and something very alarming, but that he is sure it is against the government.

“The other is convinced that it must be right, and wishes he had been there, for he loves wine and venison, and resolves as long as he lives to be against the government.

“The petition is then handed from town to town, and from house to house; and wherever it comes, the inhabitants flock together that they may see that which must be sent to the king. Names are easily collected. One man signs because he hates the papists; another because he has vowed destruction to the turnpikes; one because it will vex the parson; another because he owes his landlord nothing; one because he is rich; another because he is poor; one to show that he is not afraid; and another to show that he can write.”

The only writing in which we see a distinct reflection of Johnson's talk is the *Lives of the Poets*. The excellence of that book is of the same kind as

the excellence of his conversation. Johnson wrote it under pressure, and it has suffered from his characteristic indolence. Modern authors would fill as many pages as Johnson has filled lines, with the biographies of some of his heroes. By industriously sweeping together all the rubbish which is in any way connected with the great man, by elaborately discussing the possible significance of infinitesimal bits of evidence, and by disquisition upon general principles or the whole mass of contemporary literature, it is easy to swell volumes to any desired extent. The result is sometimes highly interesting and valuable, as it is sometimes a new contribution to the dust-heaps; but in any case the design is something quite different from Johnson's. He has left much to be supplied and corrected by later scholars. His aim is simply to give a vigorous summary of the main facts of his heroes' lives, a pithy analysis of their character, and a short criticism of their productions. The strong sense which is everywhere displayed, the massive style, which is yet easier and less cumbrous than in his earlier work, and the uprightness and independence of the judgments, make the book agreeable even where we are most inclined to dissent from its conclusions.

The criticism is that of a school which has died out under the great revolution of modern taste. The booksellers decided that English poetry began for their purposes with Cowley, and Johnson has, therefore, nothing to say about some of the greatest names in our literature. The loss is little to be regretted,

since the biographical part of earlier memoirs must have been scanty, and the criticism inappreciative. Johnson, it may be said, like most of his contemporaries, considered poetry almost exclusively from the didactic and logical point of view. He always inquires what is the moral of a work of art. If he does not precisely ask "what it proves," he pays excessive attention to the logical solidity and coherence of its sentiments. He condemns not only insincerity and affectation of feeling, but all such poetic imagery as does not correspond to the actual prosaic belief of the writer. For the purely musical effects of poetry he has little or no feeling, and allows little deviation from the alternate long and short syllables neatly bound in Pope's couplets.

To many readers this would imply that Johnson omits precisely the poetic element in poetry. I must be here content to say that in my opinion it implies rather a limitation than a fundamental error. Johnson errs in supposing that his logical tests are at all adequate; but it is, I think, a still greater error to assume that poetry has no connection, because it has not this kind of connection, with philosophy. His criticism has always a meaning, and in the case of works belonging to his own school a very sound meaning. When he is speaking of other poetry, we can only reply that his remarks may be true, but that they are not to the purpose.

The remarks on the poetry of Dryden, Addison, and Pope are generally excellent, and always give the genuine expression of an independent judgment.

Whoever thinks for himself, and says plainly what he thinks, has some merit as a critic. This, it is true, is about all that can be said for such criticism as that on *Lycidas*, which is a delicious example of the wrong way of applying strong sense to inappropriate topics. Nothing can be truer in a sense, and nothing less relevant.

"In this poem," he says, "there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are easily exhausted, and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labors and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lives?—

We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove afield and had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found.

"Among the flocks and copses and flowers appear the heathen deities: Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less

display knowledge or less exercise invention than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping ; how one god asks another god what has become of Lycidas, and neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honor."

This is of course utterly outrageous, and yet much of it is undeniably true. To explain why, in spite of truth, *Lycidas* is a wonderful poem, would be to go pretty deeply into the theory of poetic expression. Most critics prefer simply to shriek, being at any rate safe from the errors of independent judgment.

The general effect of the book, however, is not to be inferred from this or some other passages of antiquated and eccentric criticism. It is the shrewd sense everywhere cropping up which is really delightful. The keen remarks upon life and character, though, perhaps, rather too severe in tone, are worthy of a vigorous mind, stored with much experience of many classes, and braced by constant exercise in the conversational arena. Passages everywhere abound which, though a little more formal in expression, have the forcible touch of his best conversational sallies. Some of the prejudices, which are expressed more pithily in *Boswell*, are defended by a reasoned exposition in the *Lives*. Sentence is passed with the true judicial air; and if he does not convince us of his complete impartiality, he at least bases his decisions upon solid and worthy grounds. It would be too much, for example, to expect that

Johnson should sympathize with the grand republicanism of Milton, or pardon a man who defended the execution of the blessed Martyr. He failed, therefore, to satisfy the ardent admirers of the great poet. Yet his judgment is not harsh or ungenerous, but, at worst, the judgment of a man striving to be just, in spite of some inevitable want of sympathy.

The quality of Johnson's incidental remarks may be inferred from one or two brief extracts. Here is an observation which Johnson must have had many chances of verifying. Speaking of Dryden's money difficulties, he says, "It is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal, and they that trust her promises, make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow."

Here is another shrewd comment upon the compliments paid to Halifax, of whom Pope says in the character of Bufo,—

Fed with soft dedications all day long,
Horace and he went hand and hand in song.

"To charge all unmerited praise with the guilt of flattery, or to suppose that the encomiast always knows and feels the falsehoods of his assertions, is surely to discover great ignorance of human nature and of human life. In determinations depending not on rules, but on reference and comparison, judgment is always in some degree subject to affection. Very near to admiration is the wish to admire.

"Every man willingly gives value to the praise

which he receives, and considers the sentence passed in his favor as the sentence of discernment. We admire in a friend that understanding that selected us for confidence; we admire more in a patron that bounty which, instead of scattering bounty indiscriminately, directed it to us; and if the patron be an author, those performances which gratitude forbids us to blame, affection will easily dispose us to exalt.

“To these prejudices, hardly culpable, interest adds a power always operating, though not always, because not willingly, perceived. The modesty of praise gradually wears away; and, perhaps, the pride of patronage may be in time so increased that modest praise will no longer please.

“Many a blandishment was practised upon Halifax, which he would never have known had he no other attractions than those of his poetry, of which a short time has withered the beauties. It would now be esteemed no honor by a contributor to the monthly bundles of verses, to be told that, in strains either familiar or solemn, he sings like Halifax.”

I will venture to make a longer quotation from the life of Pope, which gives, I think, a good impression of his manner:—

“Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favorable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so

long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him.

“ But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view ; and certainly what we hide from ourselves, we do not show to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse.

“ In the eagerness of conversation, the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered. In the tumult of business, interest and passion have their gennine effect ; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down by design to depreciate his own character.

“ Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity ; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep ? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint ; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind ; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known, and must therefore please, if not by favoring them, by forbearing

to oppose them. To charge those favorable representations which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would show more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts while they are general are right, and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

“ If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition*. To know whether he disentangles himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison. One of his favorite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed, and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when ‘ he has just nothing else to do,’ yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he ‘ had always some poetical scheme in his head.’ It was punctually

required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related that, in the dreadful winter of '40, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper lest he should lose a thought.

“He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped he did despise them. As he happened to live in two reigns when the court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish distaste of kings, and proclaims that ‘he never sees courts.’ Yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, ‘How he could love a prince while he disliked kings.’”

Johnson's best poetry is the versified expression of the tone of sentiment with which we are already familiar. The *Vanity of Human Wishes* is, perhaps, the finest poem written since Pope's time and in Pope's manner, with the exception of Goldsmith's still finer performances. Johnson, it need hardly be said, has not Goldsmith's exquisite fineness of touch and delicacy of sentiment. He is often ponderous and verbose, and one feels that the mode of expression is not that which is most congenial; and yet the vigor of thought makes itself felt through rather

clumsy modes of utterance. Here is one of the best passages, in which he illustrates the vanity of military glory :—

On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes let Swedish Charles decide ;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him and no labours tire ;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain ;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field ;
Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign :
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain,
"Think nothing gain'd," he cries, "till nought remain
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky ?"
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait ;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of Frost.
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay—
Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day !
The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands ;
Condemn'd a needy suppliant to wait,
While ladies interpose and slaves debate—
But did not Chance at length her error mend ?
Did no subverted empire mark his end ?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound ?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground ?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress and a dubious hand ;
He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral and adorn a tale.

The concluding passage may also fitly conclude this survey of Johnson's writings. The sentiment is

less gloomy than is usual, but it gives the answer which he would have given in his calmer moods to the perplexed riddle of life ; and, in some form or other, it is, perhaps, the best or the only answer that can be given :—

Where, then, shall Hope and Fear their objects find ?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind ?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate ?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise ?
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies ?
Inquirer cease ; petitions yet remain
Which Heaven may hear, nor deem religion vain ;
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice
Safe in His power whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer.
Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
Secure whate'er He gives—F gives the best.
Yet when the scene of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions and a will resign'd ;
For Love, which scarce collective men can fill ;
For Patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill ;
For Faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts Death kind nature's signal of retreat.
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
These goods He grants who grants the power to gain ;
With these Celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

*You are
deluded*

THE HISTORY OF RASSELAS, PRINCE OF ABYSSINIA.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF A PALACE IN A VALLEY

YE who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas, prince of Abyssinia.

— Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperor, in whose dominions the Father of Waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abyssinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.

The place, which the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abyssinian princes, was a spacious valley in the king-

dom of Amhara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summits overhang the middle part. The only passage by which it could be entered was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it has long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was closed with gates of iron forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massivethat no man could without the help of engines open or shut them.

From the mountains on every side, rivulets descended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle, inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake discharged its superfluities by a stream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern side, and fell with dreadful noise from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more.

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass or browse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures, on another all the beasts of chase frisking in the lawns; the sprightly kid was bounding on rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking in the

trees, and the solemn elephant reposing in the shade. All the diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, supplied its inhabitants with the necessities of life, and all delights and superfluities were added at the annual visit which the emperor paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the sound of music; and during eight days every one that resided in the valley was required to propose whatever might contribute to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time. Every desire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleasure were called to gladden the festivity; the musicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers showed their activity before the princes, in hope that they should pass their lives in this blissful captivity; to which those only were admitted whose performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of security and delight, which this retirement afforded, that they, to whom it was new, always desired that it might be perpetual; and as those, on whom the iron gate had once closed, were never suffered to return, the effect of longer experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new schemes of delight, and new competitors for imprisonment.

The palace stood on an eminence raised about thirty paces above the surface of the lake. It was divided into many squares or courts, built with

greater or less magnificence, according to the rank of those for whom they were designed. The roofs were turned into arches of massy stone, joined by a cement that grew harder by time, and the building stood from century to century deriding the solstitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This house, which was so large as to be fully known to none but some ancient officers who successively inherited the secrets of the place, was built as if suspicion herself had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and secret passage, every square had a communication with the rest, either from the upper storeys by private galleries, or by subterranean passages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unsuspected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had deposited their treasures. They then closed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmost exigencies of the kingdom : and recorded their accumulations in a book, which was itself concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperor attended by the prince who stood next in succession.

CHAPTER II.

THE DISCONTENT OF RASSELAS IN THE HAPPY
VALLEY.

HERE the sons and daughters of Abyssinia lived only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose, attended by all that were skillful to delight, and gratified with whatever the senses can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and slept in the fortresses of security. Every art was practiced to make them pleased with their own condition. The sages who instructed them told them of nothing but the miseries of public life, and described all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where discord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with songs, the subject of which was the *happy valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments; and revelry and merriment was the business of every hour from the dawn of morning to the close of even.

These methods were generally successful: few of the princes had ever wished to enlarge their bounds, but passed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature

could bestow, and pitied those whom fate had excluded from this seat of tranquillity, as the sport of chance and the slaves of misery.

Thus they rose in the morning and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves; all but Rasselas, who in the twenty-sixth year of his age began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks and silent meditation. He often sat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him; he rose abruptly in the midst of the song and hastily retired beyond the sound of music. His attendants observed the change and endeavored to renew his love of pleasure; he neglected their officiousness, and repulsed their invitations, and spent day after day on the banks of rivulets sheltered with trees, where he sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes observed the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes.

This singularity of his humor made him much observed. One of the sages, in whose conversation he had formerly delighted, followed him secretly, in hope of discovering the cause of his disquiet. Rasselas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for some time fixed his eyes upon the goats, that were browsing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

“What,” said he, “makes the difference between

man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast that strays besides me has the same corporal necessities with myself; he is hungry and crops the grass, he is thirsty and drinks the stream, his thirst and hunger are appeased, he is satisfied, and sleeps; he rises again and is hungry, he is again fed and is at rest. I am hungry and thirsty like him, but when thirst and hunger cease I am not at rest; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with fulness. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry, that I may again quicken my attention. The birds pick the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves, where they sit in seeming happiness on the branches, and waste their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds. I likewise can call the lutanist and the singer, but the sounds that pleased me yesterday weary me to-day, and will grow yet more wearisome to-morrow. I can discover within me no power of perception which is not glutted with its proper pleasure, yet I do not feel myself delighted. Man surely has some latent sense for which this place affords no gratification; or he has some desires, distinct from sense, which must be satisfied before he can be happy."

After this he lifted up his head, and, seeing the moon rising, walked towards the palace. As he passed through the fields and saw the animals around him, "Ye," said he, "are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you, burdened with myself; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your

felicity ; for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses from which ye are free : I fear pain when I do not feel it ; I sometimes shrink at evils recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated. Surely the equity of Providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments."

With observations like these the prince amused himself as he returned ; uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diversions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.

CHAPTER III.

THE WANTS OF HIM THAT WANTS NOTHING.

ON the next day his old instructor, imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and officiously sought an opportunity of conference; which the prince having long considered him as one whose intellects were exhausted, was not very willing to afford: "Why," said he, "does this man thus intrude upon me; shall I be never suffered to forget those lectures which pleased only while they were new, and to become new again must be forgotten?" He then walked into the wood, and composed himself to his usual meditations; when, before his thoughts had taken any settled form, he perceived his pursuer at his side, and was at first prompted by his impatience to go hastily away; but being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once revered and still loved, he invited him to sit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately observed in the prince, and to inquire why he so often retired from the pleasures of the palace, to loneliness and silence? "I fly from pleasures," said the prince, "because pleasure has ceased to please; I am lonely because I am

miserable, and am unwilling to cloud with my presence the happiness of others." "You, sir," said the sage, "are the first who has complained of misery in the *happy valley*. I hope to convince you that your complaints have no real cause. You are here in full possession of all that the emperor of Abyssinia can bestow; here is neither labor to be endured nor danger to be dreaded, yet here is all that labor or danger can procure or purchase. Look round and tell me which of your wants is without supply; if you want nothing how are you unhappy?"

"That I want nothing," said the prince, "nor that I know not what I want, is the cause of my complaint. If I had any known want, I should have a certain wish; that wish would excite endeavor, and I should not then repine to see the sun move so slowly towards the western mountain, or lament when the day breaks, and sleep will no longer hide me from myself. When I see the kids and the lambs chasing one another, I fancy that I should be happy if I had something to pursue. But, possessing all that I can want I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is still more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me how the day may now seem as short as in my childhood, while nature was yet fresh, and every moment showed me what I never had observed before. I have already enjoyed too much; give me something to desire."

The old man was surprised at this new species of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwill-

ing to be silent. "Sir," said he, "if you had seen the miseries of the world, you would know how to value your present state." "Now," said the prince, "you have given me something to desire; I shall long to see the miseries of the world, since the sight of them is necessary to happiness."

He thinks he can achieve happiness or at least recognize happiness after seeing the misery of how the real world lives.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCE CONTIUES TO GRIEVE AND MUSE.

AT this time the sound of music proclaimed the hour of repast, and the conversation was concluded. The old man went away sufficiently discontented, to find that his reasonings had produced the only conclusion which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life shame and grief are of short duration; whether it be that we bear easily what we have borne long; or that, finding ourselves in age less regarded, we less regard others; or, that we look with slight regard upon afflictions to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whose views were extended to a wider space, could not speedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promised him, because he considered that in a long time much must be endured: he now rejoiced in his youth, because in many years much might be done.

This first beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the lustre of his eyes. He was fired with the desire of doing something, though he knew not yet with distinctness either end or means.

He was now no longer gloomy and unsocial ; but, considering himself as master of a secret stock of happiness, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be busy in all schemes of diversion, and endeavoring to make others pleased with the state of which he himself was weary. But pleasures never can be so multiplied or continued as not to leave much of life unemployed ; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could spend without suspicion in solitary thought. The load of life was much lightened ; he went eagerly into the assemblies, because he supposed the frequency of his presence necessary to the success of his purposes ; he retired gladly to privacy, because he had now a subject of thought.

His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen ; to place himself in various conditions ; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties and to be engaged in wild adventures ; but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness.

Thus passed twenty months of the life of Rasselas. He busied himself so intensely in visionary bustle that he forgot his real solitude ; and, amidst hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to consider by what means he should mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was sitting on a bank, he feigned to himself an orphan virgin robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for

restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind that he started up in the maid's defence, and ran forward to seize the plunderer with all the eagerness of real pursuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Rasselas could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary, by perseverance, him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then, raising his eyes to the mountain, "This," said he, "is the fatal obstacle that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleasure, and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to surmount!"

Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse; and remembered, that since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. "In life," said he, "is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reasonably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the

four and twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed it; but of twenty months to come who can assure me?"

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself. "The rest of my time," said he, "has been lost by the crime or folly of my ancestors and the absurd institutions of my country; I remember it with disgust, yet without remorse: but the months that have passed since new light darted into my soul, since I formed a scheme of reasonable felicity, have been squandered by my own fault. I have lost that which can never be restored; I have seen the sun rise and set for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: in this time the birds have left the nest of their mother, and committed themselves to the woods and to the skies: the kid has forsaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rock in quest of independent sustenance. I only have made no advances, but am still helpless and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admonished me of the flux of life; the stream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth, and of the instructions of the planets. Twenty months are passed, who shall restore them?"

These sorrowful meditations fastened upon his mind; he passed four months in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves; and was awakened to more vigorous exertion by hearing a maid, who had broken

a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious ; and Rasselas reproached himself that he had not discovered it, having not known or not considered how many useful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardor to distant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the means of escaping from the valley of happiness.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRINCE MEDITATES HIS ESCAPE.

HE now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature, which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none that once had passed it were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in the grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the powers of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was by its position exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and, looking down at a time when the sun shone strongly upon its mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but, having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In these fruitless searches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements which beguiled his labor and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavors, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible inquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet abated; he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search by new toils for interstices, which he knew could not be found yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

Desire combined w/ hope = happiness

diversions = happiness

His desire to leave prompts other diversions of thought
which lead to happiness

CHAPTER VI.

A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING.

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the happy valley, to labor for the accommodation and pleasure of its inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanic powers, who had contrived many engines both of use and recreation. By a wheel which the stream turned he forced the water into a tower, whence it was distributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial showers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet that ran through it gave a constant motion ; the instruments of soft music were placed at proper distances, of which some played by the impulse of the wind and some by the power of the stream.

This artist was sometimes visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot ; he saw that the design was practicable upon a level surface, and with expressions of great esteem solicited

its completion. The workman was pleased to find himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honors. "Sir," said he, "you have seen but a small part of what the mechanic sciences can perform. I have been long of opinion that, instead of the tardy conveyance of ships and chariots, man might use the swifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleness need crawl upon the ground."

This hint rekindled the prince's desire of passing the mountains: having seen what the mechanist had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet resolved to inquire further, before he suffered hope to afflict him by disappointment. "I am afraid," said he to the artist, "that your imagination prevails over your skill, and that you now tell me rather what you wish than what you know. Every animal has his element assigned him; the birds have the air, and man and beasts the earth."

"So," replied the mechanist, "fishes have the water, in which yet beasts can swim by nature, and men by art. He that can swim needs not despair to fly; to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler. We are only to proportion our power of resistance to the different density of matter through which we are to pass. You will be necessarily upborne by the air, if you can renew any impulse upon it faster than the air can recede from the pressure."

"But the exercise of swimming," said the prince, "is very laborious; the strongest limbs are soon wearied; I am afraid the act of flying will be yet more violent; and wings will be of no great use unless we can fly further than we can swim."

"The labor of rising from the ground," said the artist, "will be great, as we see it in the heavier domestic fowls, but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction and the body's gravity will be gradually diminished, till we shall arrive at a region where the man will float in the air without any tendency to fall; no care will then be necessary but to move forwards, which the gentlest impulse will effect. You, sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and presenting to him successively, by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the same parallel, How must it amuse the pendent spectator to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities and deserts! To survey with equal serenity the marts of trade and the fields of battle; mountains infested by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty and lulled by peace! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all his passage; pass over to distant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity to the other!"

"All this," said the prince, "is much to be desired; but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in these regions of speculation and tranquillity. I

have been told that respiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet from these precipices, though so high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very easy to fall: therefore I suspect, that, from any height where life can be supported, there may be danger of too quick descent."

"Nothing," replied the artist, "will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome. If you will favor my project, I will try the first flight at my own hazard. I have considered the structure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings most easily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I shall begin my task to-morrow, and in a year expect to tower in the air beyond the malice and pursuit of man. But I will work only on this condition, that the art shall not be divulged, and that you shall not require me to make wings for any but ourselves."

"Why," said Rasselas, "should you envy others so great an advantage? All skill ought to be exerted for universal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindness that he has received."

"If men were all virtuous," returned the artist, "I should with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas could afford any security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light at once with irresistible violence upon the

capital of a fruitful region that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated by the sudden descent of some of the naked nations that swarm on the coast of the southern sea."

The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work from time to time, observed its progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence seized upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finished; and, on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furnished for flight on a little promontory; he waved his pinions awhile to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no use in the air, sustained him in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A MAN OF LEARNING.

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event, only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the happy valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand; he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwithstanding all his endeavors to support himself, discontent by degrees preyed upon him, and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which in these countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had ever been known; the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestic amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was particularly seized by a poem, which Imlac rehearsed upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verses a second time ; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himself happy in having found a man who knew the world so well, and could so skilfully paint the scenes of life. He asked a thousand questions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a stranger. The poet pitied his ignorance and loved his curiosity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and instruction, so that the prince regretted the necessity of sleep, and longed till the morning should renew his pleasure.

As they were sitting together the prince commanded Imlac to relate his history, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced, to close his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Rasselas was called to a concert, and obliged to restrain his curiosity till the evening.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC.

THE close of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only season of diversion and entertainment, and it was therefore midnight before the music ceased, and the princes retired. Rasselas then called for his companion and required him to begin the story of his life.

"Sir," said Imlac, "my history will not be long: the life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself."

"I was born in the kingdom of Goiama, at no great distance from the fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant who traded between the inland countries of Afric and the ports of the Red Sea. He was honest, frugal, and diligent, but of mean sentiments and narrow comprehension; he desired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, lest he should be spoiled by the governors of the province."

"Surely," said the prince, "my father must be negligent of his charge, if any man in his dominions dares take that which belongs to another. Does he not know that kings are accountable for injustice permitted as well as done? If I were emperor, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity. My blood boils when I am told that a merchant durst not enjoy his honest gains for fear of losing them by the rapacity of power. Name the governor who robbed the people that I may declare his crimes to the emperor."

"Sir," said Imlac, "your ardor is the natural effect of virtue animated by youth: the time will come when you will acquit your father, and perhaps hear with less impatience of the governor. Oppression is, in the Abyssinian dominions, neither frequent nor tolerated: but no form of government has yet been discovered by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination supposes power on the one part, and subjection on the other, and if power be in the hands of men, it will sometimes be abused. The vigilance of the supreme magistrate may do much, but much will still remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can seldom punish all that he knows."

"This," said the prince, "I do not understand, but I had rather hear thee than dispute. Continue thy narration."

"My father," proceeded Imlac, "originally intended that I should have no other education than such as might qualify me for commerce; and, dis-

covering in me great strength of memory and quickness of apprehension, often declared his hope that I should be some time the richest man in Abyssinia."

"Why," said the prince, "did thy father desire the increase of his wealth, when it was already greater than he durst discover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconsistencies cannot both be true."

"Inconsistencies," answered Imlac, "cannot both be right; but, imputed to man, they may both be true. Yet diversity is not inconsistency. My father might expect a time of greater security. However, some desire is necessary to keep life in motion; and he whose real wants are supplied must admit those of fancy."

"This," said the prince, "I can in some measure conceive. I repent that I interrupted thee."

"With this hope," proceeded Imlac, "he sent me to school; but when I had once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence and the pride of invention, I began silently to despise riches, and determined to disappoint the purpose of my father, whose grossness of conception raised my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderness would expose me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been instructed, by successive masters, in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me something new, I lived in a continual course of gratifications; but as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with which I had been used to look on my instructors; because,

when the lesson was ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men.

“At length my father resolved to initiate me in commerce: and, opening one of his subterranean treasuries, counted out ten thousand pieces of gold. ‘This, young man,’ said he, ‘is the stock with which you must negotiate. I began with less than the fifth part, and you see how diligence and parsimony have increased it. This is your own to waste or to improve. If you squander it by negligence or caprice, you must wait for death before you be rich; if, in four years, you double your stock, we will thenceforward let subordination cease, and live together as friends and partners; for he shall be always equal with me who is equally skilled in the art of growing rich.’

“We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled to the shore of the Red Sea. When I cast my eye upon the expanse of waters, my heart bounded like that of a prisoner escaped. I felt an unextinguishable curiosity kindle in my mind, and resolved to snatch this opportunity of seeing the manners of other nations, and of learning sciences unknown in Abyssinia.

“I remember that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my stock, not but a promise which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur; and therefore determined to gratify my predominant desire, and, by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity.

“As I was supposed to trade without connection with my father, it was easy for me to become acquainted with the master of a ship, and procure a passage to some other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage: it was sufficient for me that, wherever I wandered, I should see a country which I had not seen before. I therefore entered a ship bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father declaring my intention.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

“WHEN I first entered upon the world of waters, and lost sight of land, I looked round about me with pleasing terror, and, thinking my soul enlarged by the boundless prospect, imagined that I could gaze round without satiety, but, in a short time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only see again what I had already seen. I then descended into the ship, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleasures would not end like this, in disgust and disappointment. Yet, surely, said I, the ocean and the land are very different; the only variety of water is rest and motion, but the earth has mountains and valleys, deserts and cities: it is inhabited by men of different customs and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in life though I should miss it in nature.

“With this thought I quieted my mind, and amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of navigation, which I have never practised, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of which I have been ever placed,

"I was almost weary of my naval amusements when we landed safely at Surat. I secured my money, and purchasing some commodities for show, joined myself to a caravan that was passing into the inland country. My companions, for some reason or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my inquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, considered me as a novice whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn at the usual expense the art of fraud. They exposed me to the theft of servants and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered upon false pretences, without any advantage to themselves, but that of rejoicing in the superiority of their own knowledge."

"Stop a moment," said the prince. "Is there such depravity in man as that he should injure another without benefit to himself? I can easily conceive that all are pleased with superiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which, being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reason to applaud themselves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have shown by warning as betraying you."

"Pride," said Imlac, "is seldom delicate, it will please itself with very mean advantages; and envy feels not its own happiness, but when it may be compared with the misery of others. They were my enemies, because they grieved to think me rich, and my oppressors, because they delighted to find me weak."

"Proceed," said the prince; "I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to mistaken motives."

"In this company," said Imlac, "I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indostan, the city in which the Great Mogul commonly resides. I applied myself to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converse with the learned men; some of whom I found morose and reserved and others easy and communicative; some were unwilling to teach another what they had with difficulty learned themselves, and some showed that the end of their studies was to gain the dignity of instructing.

"To the tutor of the young princes I recommended myself so much that I was presented to the emperor as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperor asked me many questions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect anything that he uttered above the power of a common man, he dismissed me astonished at his wisdom, and enamored of his goodness.


"My credit was now so high that the merchants with whom I travelled applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the court. I was surprised at their confidence of solicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cold indifference, and showed no tokens of shame or sorrow.

"They then urged their request with the offer of a bribe: but what I would not do for kindness, I would not do for money; and refused them, not be-

cause they had injured me, but because I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made use of my credit to cheat those who should buy their wares.

“Having resided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many remains of ancient magnificence, and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

“From Persia I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation at once pastoral and warlike; who live without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions.”



CHAPTER X.

IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A DISSERTATION ON
POETRY.

"WHEREVER I went, I found that poetry was con-
sidered as the highest learning, and regarded with a
veneration somewhat approaching to that which man
would pay to the Angelic Nature. And yet it fills
me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the
most ancient poets are considered as the best;
whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is
an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a
gift conferred at once ; or that the first poetry of
every nation surprised them as a novelty, and re-
tained the credit by consent, which it received by
accident at first: or whether, as the province of
poetry is to describe nature and passion, which are
always the same, the first writers took possession of
the most striking objects for description, and the
most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing
to those that followed them, but transcription of the
same events, and new combinations of the same
images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly
observed that the early writers are in possession of
nature, and their followers of art; that the first excel
in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance
and refinement.

"I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca. But I soon found that no man was great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors: I could never describe what I had not seen: I could not hope to move those with delight or terror, whose interests and opinions I did not understand.

"Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw everything with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified: no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful and whatever is dreadful must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety: for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he who knows most will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and

of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

"All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to study; and every country which I have surveyed has contributed something to my poetical powers."

"In so wide a survey," said the prince, "you must surely have left much unobserved. I have lived, till now, within the circuit of these mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the sight of something which I had never beheld before or never heeded."

"The business of a poet," said Imlac, "is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features as recall the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness."

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions and accidental influences of climate or custom,

from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same; he must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name; condemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place.

“His labor is not yet at an end; he must know many languages and many sciences: and, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must, by incessant practice, familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony.”

CHAPTER XI.

IMLAC'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED. A HINT ON
PILGRIMAGE.

IMLAC now felt the enthusiastic fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profession, when the prince cried out, "Enough! thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration."

"To be a poet," said Imlac, "is indeed very difficult."

"So difficult," returned the prince, "that I will at present hear no more of his labors. Tell me whither you went when you had seen Persia."

"From Persia," said the poet, "I travelled through Syria, and for three years resided in Palestine, where I conversed with great numbers of the northern and western nations of Europe; the nations which are now in possession of all power and all knowledge: whose armies are irresistible, and whose fleets command the remotest parts of the globe. When I compared these men with the natives of our own kingdom, and those that surround us, they appeared almost another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wish for anything that may not be obtained: a thousand arts, of which we never heard, are continually laboring for their convenience and

pleasure ; and whatever their own climate has denied them is supplied by their commerce."

"By what means," said the prince, "are the Europeans thus powerful; or why, since they can so easily visit Asia or Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiatics and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us thither."

"They are more powerful, sir, than we," answered Imlac, "because they are wiser; knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being."

"When," said the prince with a sigh, "shall I be able to visit Palestine, and mingle with this mighty confluence of nations? Till that happy moment shall arrive, let me fill up the time with such representations as thou canst give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that assembles such numbers in that place, and cannot but consider it as the centre of wisdom and piety, to which the best and wisest of every land must be continually resorting."

"There are some nations," said Imlac, "that send few visitants to Palestine; for many numerous and learned sects in Europe concur to censure pilgrimage as superstitious or deride it as ridiculous."

"You know," said the prince, "how little my life has made me acquainted with diversity of opinions: it will be too long to hear the arguments on

both sides; you, that have considered them, tell me the result."

"Pilgrimage," said Imlac, "like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journeys in search of truth are not commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety, for it inevitably produces dissipation of mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning: and I believe no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions. That the Supreme Being may be more easily propitiated in one place than in another is the dream of idle superstition; but that some places may operate upon our minds in an uncommon manner is an opinion which hourly experience will justify. He who supposes that his vices may be more successfully combated in Palestine will, perhaps, find himself mistaken; yet he may go thither without folly: he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned dishonors at once his reason and religion."

"These," said the prince, "are European distinctions. I will consider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are those nations happier than we?"

"There is so much infelicity," said the poet, "in the world, that scarce any man has leisure from his own distresses to estimate the comparative happiness of others. Knowledge, is certainly one of the means of pleasure as is confessed by the natural desire which every mind feels of increasing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced: it is a vacuity in which the soul sits motionless and torpid for want of attraction; and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am therefore inclined to conclude, that if nothing counteracts the natural consequence of learning, we grow more happy as our minds take a wider range.

"In enumerating the particular comforts of life, we shall find many advantages on the side of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diseases with which we languish and perish. We suffer inclemencies of weather which they can obviate. They have engines for the despatch of many laborious works which we must perform by manual industry. There is such communication between distant places that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another. Their policy removes all public inconveniences; they have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And, if we descend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their possessions are more secure."

"They are surely happy," said the prince, "who have all these conveniences, of which I envy none so

much as the facility with which separated friends interchange their thoughts."

"The Europeans," answered Imlac, "are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed."

CHAPTER XII.

THE STORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

“I AM not yet willing,” said the prince, “to suppose that happiness is so parsimoniously distributed to mortals; nor can believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I should be able to fill every day with pleasure. I would injure no man, and should provoke no resentment: I would relieve every distress, and should enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I would choose my friends among the wise and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore should be in no danger from treachery or unkindness. My children should, by my care, be learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to molest him who might call on every side to thousands enriched by his bounty, or assisted by his power? And why should not life glide quietly away in the soft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear by their effects to be rather specious than useful. Let us leave them, and pursue our journey.”

“From Palestine,” said Imlac, “I passed through many regions of Asia, in the more civilized kingdoms as a trader, and among the barbarians of the mountains as a pilgrim. At last I began to long for my

native country, that I might repose, after my travels and fatigues, in the places where I had spent my earliest years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myself those with whom I had sported away the gay hours of dawning life, sitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and listening to my counsels.

“When this thought had taken possession of my mind, I considered every moment as wasted which did not bring me nearer to Abyssinia. I hastened into Egypt, and notwithstanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in inquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; some brought thither by the love of knowledge, some by the hope of gain, and many by the desire of living after their own manner without observation, and of lying hid in the obscurity of multitudes; for in a city, populous as Cairo, it is possible to obtain at the same time the gratifications of society and the secrecy of solitude.

“From Cairo I travelled to Suez, and embarked on the Red Sea, passing along the coast till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here I joined myself to a caravan, and re-entered my native country.

“I now expected the caresses of my kinsmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had set upon riches, would own with gladness and pride a son

who was able to add to the felicity and honor of the nation. But I was soon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to some other provinces. Of my companions the greater part was in the grave; of the rest, some could with difficulty remember me, and some considered me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

“A man used to vicissitudes is not easily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my disappointment, and endeavored to recommend myself to the nobles of the kingdom; they admitted me to their tables, heard my story, and dismissed me. I opened a school, and was prohibited to teach. I then resolved to sit down in the quiet of domestic life, and addressed a lady that was fond of my conversation, but rejected my suit because my father was a merchant.

“Wearied at last with solicitations and repulses, I resolved to hide myself forever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion or caprice of others. I waited for the time when the gate of the *happy valley* should open, that I might bid farewell to hope and fear: the day came; my performance was distinguished with favor, and I resigned myself with joy to perpetual confinement.”

“Hast thou here found happiness at last? Tell me without reserve; art thou content with thy condition? or, dost thou wish to be again wandering and inquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate their lot, and at the annual visit of the emperor invite others to partake of their felicity.”

"Great prince," said Imlac, "I shall speak the truth; I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and by recollections of the incidents of my past life. Yet all this ends in the sorrowful consideration, that my acquirements are now useless, and that none of my pleasures can be again enjoyed. The rest, whose minds have no impression but that of the present moment, are either corroded by malignant passions or sit stupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy."

"What passions can infest those," said the prince, "who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repressed by community of enjoyments."

"There may be community," said Imlac, "of material possessions, but there can never be community of love or of esteem. It must happen that one will please more than another: he that knows himself despised will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him. The invitations by which they allure others to a state which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has

forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves.

"From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can say that he is wretched by my persuasion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually soliciting admission into captivity, and wish that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger."

"My dear Imlac," said the prince, "I will open to thee my whole heart. I have long meditated an escape from the *happy valley*. I have examined the mountains on every side, and find myself insuperably barred: teach me the way to break my prison: thou shalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the *choice of life*."

"Sir," answered the poet, "your escape will be difficult; and, perhaps, you may soon repent your curiosity. The world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests and boiling with whirlpools: you will be sometimes overwhelmed with the waves of violence, and sometimes dashed against the rocks of treachery. Amidst wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wish a thousand times for these seats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear."

"Do not seek to deter me from my purpose," said the prince; "I am impatient to see what thou hast seen; and since thou art thyself weary of the valley, it is evident that thy former state was better than this. Whatever be the consequence of my experi-

ment, I am resolved to judge with mine own eyes of the various conditions of men, and then to make deliberately my *choice of life*."

"I am afraid," said Imlac, "you are hindered by stronger restraints than my persuasions ; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things, are impossible to diligence and skill."

CHAPTER XIII.

RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.

THE prince now dismissed his favorite to rest, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable questions for the morning.

Much of his uneasiness was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whose experience could assist him in his designs. His heart was no longer condemned to swell in silent vexation. He thought that even the *happy valley* might be endured with such a companion; and that if they could range the world together, he should have nothing further to desire.

In a few days the water was discharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converse without the notice of the rest. The prince, whose thoughts were always on the wing, as he passed by the gate, said, with a countenance of sorrow, "Why art thou so strong, and why is man so weak?"

"Man is not weak," answered his companion; "knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The master of mechanics laughs at strength. I can burst

the gate, but cannot do it secretly. Some other expedient must be tried."

As they were walking on the side of the mountain, they observed that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken shelter among the bushes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. "It has been the opinion of antiquity," said Imlac, "that human reason borrowed many arts from the instinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourselves degraded by learning from the cony. We may escape by piercing the mountain in the same direction. We will begin where the summit hangs over the middle part, and labor upward till we shall issue up beyond the prominence."

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this proposal, sparkled with joy. The execution was easy, and the success certain.

No time was now lost. They hastened, early in the morning, to choose a place proper for their mind. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and brambles, and returned without having discovered any part that favored their design. The second and third day were spent in the same manner, and with the same frustration. But, on the fourth, they found a small cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they resolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured instruments proper to hew stone and remove earth, and they fell to their work the next day with more eagerness than vigor. They were presently exhausted by their efforts, and sat

down to pant upon the grass. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be discouraged. "Sir," said his companion, "practice will enable us to continue our labor for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will some time have an end. [Great works are performed, not by strength, but by perseverance] yonder palace was raised by single stones, yet you see its height and spaciousness. He that shall walk with vigor three hours a day, will pass in seven years a space equal to the circumference of the globe."

They returned to their work day after day; and, in a short time, found a fissure in the rock, which enabled them to pass far with very little obstruction. This Rasselas considered as a good omen. "Do not disturb your mind," said Imlac, "with other hopes and fears than reason may suggest: if you are pleased with prognostics of good, you will be terrified likewise with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to superstition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cause of success. This is one of those pleasing surprises which often happen to active resolution. Many things difficult to design prove easy to performance."

CHAPTER XIV.

RASSELAS AND IMLAC RECEIVE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and solaced their thoughts with the approach of liberty, when the prince coming down to refresh himself with air, found his sister Nekayah standing before the mouth of the cavity. He started and stood confused, afraid to tell his design, and yet hopeless to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repose on her fidelity, and secure her secrecy by a declaration without reserve.

“Do not imagine,” said the princess, “that I came hither as a spy: I had long observed from my window, that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the same point, but I did not suppose you had any better reason for the preference than a cooler shade, or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other design than to partake of your conversation. Since, then, not suspicion but fondness has detected you, let me not lose the advantage of my discovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourself, and not less desirous of knowing what is done or suffered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this tasteless tranquillity,

which will yet grow more loathsome when you have left me. You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following."

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other sisters, had no inclination to refuse her request, and grieved that he had lost an opportunity of showing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that she should leave the valley with them: and that, in the mean time, she should watch lest any other straggler should, by chance or curiosity follow them to the mountain.

At length their labor was at an end: they saw light beyond the prominence, and, issuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleasure of travel, and in thought was already transported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his escape, had less expectation of pleasure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Rasselas was so much delighted with a wider horizon that he could not soon be persuaded to return into the valley. He informed his sister that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS LEAVE THE VALLEY, AND
SEE MANY WONDERS.

THE prince and princess had jewels sufficient to make them rich whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they might hide in their clothes; and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princess was followed only by a single favorite, who did not know whither she was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other side. The princess and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, seeing nothing to bound their prospect, considered themselves as in danger of being lost in a dreary vacuity. They stopped and trembled. "I am almost afraid," said the princess, "to begin a journey of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immense plain, where I may be approached on every side by men whom I never saw." The prince felt nearly the same emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac smiled at their terrors, and encouraged them to proceed: but the princess continued irresolute

till she had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found some shepherds in the field, who set milk and fruits before them. The princess wondered that she did not see a palace ready for her reception, and a table spread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, she drank the milk and ate the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavor than the products of the valley.

They travelled forward by easy journeys, being all unaccustomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing that, though they might be missed, they could not be pursued. In a few days they came into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expressed at the diversity of manners, stations, and employments.

Their dress was such as might not bring upon them the suspicion of having anything to conceal; yet the prince, whenever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princess was frightened because those that came into her presence did not prostrate themselves before her. Imlac was forced to observe them with great vigilance, lest they should betray their rank by their unusual behavior, and detained them several weeks in the first village, to accustom them to the sight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to understand that they had for a time laid aside their dignity, and were to expect only such regard as liberality and courtesy could procure. And Imlac, having, by many admonitions, prepared them to

endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedness of the commercial race, brought them down to the sea-coast.

The prince and his sister, to whom everything was new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for some months at the port without any inclination to pass further. Imlac was content with their stay, because he did not think it safe to expose them, unpractised in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At last he began to fear least they should be discovered, and proposed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretensions to judge for themselves, and referred the whole scheme to his direction. He therefore took passage in a ship to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the princess to enter the vessel. They had a quick and prosperous voyage; and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

CHAPTER XVI.

THEY ENTER CAIRO, AND FIND EVERY MAN HAPPY.

As they approached the city, which filled the strangers with astonishment, "This," said Imlac to the prince, "is the place where travellers and merchants assemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honorable: I will act as a merchant who has no other end of travel than curiosity; it will soon be observed that we are rich; our reputation will procure us access to all whom we shall desire to know; you will see all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourself at leisure to make your *choice of life*."

They now entered the town, stunned by the noise and offended by the crowds. Instruction had not yet so prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to see themselves pass undistinguished along the street, and met by the lowest of the people without reverence or notice. The princess could not at first bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and for some days continued in her chamber, where she was served by her favorite Pekuah as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who understood traffic, sold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a house, which he adorned

with such magnificence, that he was immediately considered as a merchant of great wealth. His politeness attracted many acquaintances, and his generosity made him courted by many dependents. His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge, and solicited his favor. His companions, not being able to mix in the conversation, could make no discovery of their ignorance or surprise, and were gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language.

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the use and nature of money; but the ladies could not for a long time comprehend what the merchants did with small pieces of gold and silver, or why things of so little use should be received as equivalent to the necessaries of life.

They studied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to set before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had anything uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the busy, the merchant and the men of learning.

The prince being now able to converse with fluency, and having learned the caution necessary to be observed in his intercourse with strangers, began to accompany Imlac to places of resort, and to enter into all assemblies, that he might make his *choice of life*.

For some time he thought choice needless, because all appeared to him equally happy. Wherever he

went he met gayety and kindness, and heard the song of joy or the laughter of carelessness. He began to believe that the world overflowed with universal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand showered liberality and every heart melted with benevolence; "and who, then," says he, "will be suffered to be wretched?"

Imlac permitted the pleasing delusion, and was unwilling to crush the hope of inexperience, till one day, having sat awhile silent, "I know not," said the prince, "what can be the reason that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I see them perpetually and unalterably cheerful, but feel my own mind restless and uneasy. I am unsatisfied with those pleasures which I seem most to court. I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy company as to shun myself, and am only loud and merry to conceal my sadness."

"Every man," said Imlac, "may by examining his own mind guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gayety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly where you passed the last night, there appears such sprightliness of air and volatility of fancy as might have suited beings of a higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions inaccessible to care or sorrow;

yet believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread the moment when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection."

"This," said the prince, "may be true of others, since it is true of me ; yet whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another, and wisdom surely directs us to take the least evil in the *choice of life*."

"The causes of good and evil," answered Imlac, "are so various and uncertain, so often entangled with each other, so diversified by various relations, and so much subject to accidents which cannot be foreseen, that he who would fix his condition upon incontestible reasons of preference must live and die inquiring and deliberating."

"But, surely," said Rasselas, "the wise men, to whom we listen with reverence and wonder, chose that mode of life for themselves which they thought most likely to make them happy."

"Very few," said the poet, "live by choice. Every man is placed in his present condition by causes which acted without his foresight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate ; and therefore you will rarely meet one who does not think the lot of his neighbor better than his own."

"I am pleased to think," said the prince, "that my birth has given me at least one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myself. I have here the world before me ; I will review it at leisure ; surely happiness is somewhere to be found."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRINCE ASSOCIATES WITH YOUNG MEN OF SPIRIT
AND GAYETY.

RASSELAS rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life. "Youth," cried he, "is the time of gladness: I will join myself to the young men, whose only business is to gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments."

To such societies he was readily admitted; but a few days brought him back weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and law: but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The prince soon concluded that he should never be happy in a course of life of which he was ashamed. He thought it unsuitable to a reasonable being to act without a plan, and to be sad or cheerful only by chance. "Happiness," said he, "must be something solid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty."

But his young companions had gained so much of his regard by their frankness and courtesy that he

could not leave them without warning and remonstrance. "My friends," said he, "I have seriously considered our manners and our prospects, and find that we have mistaken our own interest. The first years of man must make provision for the last. He that never thinks never can be wise. Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable. Let us consider that youth is of no long duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we shall have no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, stop while to stop is in our power: let us live as men who are some time to grow old, and to whom it will be the most dreadful of all evils not to count their past years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced."

They stared awhile in silence one upon another, and at last drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The consciousness that his sentiments were just, and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horror of derision. But he recovered his tranquillity and pursued his search.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN.

As he was one day walking in the street, he saw a spacious building, which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter; he followed the stream of people and found it a hall or school of declamation, in which professors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eyes upon a sage raised above the rest, who discoursed with great energy on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He showed, with great strength of sentiment and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of passion, usurps the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation, and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against reason, their lawful sovereign. He compared reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in its motion, and delusive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given

from time to time for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope ; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief ; but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course though the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immovable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience ; concluding, that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in every one's power.

Rasselas listened to him with the veneration due to the instructions of a superior being ; and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a purse of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

" I have found," said the prince, at his return to Imlac, " a man who can teach all that is necessary to to be known, who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him. He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons, and conviction closes

his periods. This man shall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines and imitate his life."

"Be not too hasty," said Imlac, "to trust, or to admire, the teachers of morality; they discourse like angels, but they live like men."

Rasselas, who could not conceive how any man could reason so forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his visit in a few days, and was denied admission. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philosopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes misty, and his face pale.

"Sir," said he, "you are come at a time when all human friendship is useless; what I suffer cannot be remedied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever. My views, my purposes, my hopes are at an end: I am now a lonely being disunited from society.

"Sir," said the prince, "mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised: we know that death is always near, and it should therefore always be expected."

"Young man," answered the philosopher, "you speak like one that has never felt the pangs of separation."

"Have you then forgot the precepts," said Rasselas, "which you so powerfully enforced? Has wisdom no strength to arm the heart against calamity? Con-

sider that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason are always the same."

"What comfort," said the mourner, "can truth and reason afford me? of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be restored?"

The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound, and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences.

CHAPTER XIX.

A GLIMPSE OF PASTORAL LIFE.

HE was still eager upon the same inquiry; and having heard of a hermit that lived near the lowest cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his sanctity, resolved to visit his retreat, and inquire whether that felicity, which public life could not afford, was to be found in solitude; and whether a man whose age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of shunning evils or enduring them?

Imlac and the princess agreed to accompany him; and, after the necessary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where shepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the pasture. "This," said the poet, "is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence and quiet; let us pass the heat of the day among the shepherds' tents, and know whether all our searches are not to terminate in pastoral simplicity."

The proposal pleased them, and they induced the shepherds, by small presents, and familiar questions, to tell their opinion of their own state; they were so rude and ignorant, so little able to compare the good

with the evil of the occupation, and so indistinct in their narratives and descriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident that their hearts were cankered with discontent; that they considered themselves as condemned to labor for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with stupid malevolence toward those that were placed above them.

The princess pronounced with vehemence, that she would never suffer these envious savages to be her companions, and that she should not soon be desirous of seeing any more specimens of rustic happiness; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleasures were fabulous; and was yet in doubt, whether life had anything that could be justly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when, with a few virtuous and elegant companions, she should gather flowers planted by her own hand, fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and listen, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the shade.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY.

ON the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for shelter. At a small distance they saw a thick wood, which they no sooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The shrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the shades were darkest: the boughs of opposite trees were artificially interwoven; seats of flowery turf were raised in vacant spaces: and a rivulet that wanted along the side of a winding path, had its banks sometimes opened into small basins, and its stream sometimes obstructed by little mounds of stone heaped together to increase its murmurs.

They passed slowly through the wood, delighted with such unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or who he could be, that, in those rude and unfrequented regions, had leisure and art for such harmless luxury.

As they advanced, they heard the sound of music, and saw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going still further, beheld a stately palace built upon a hill surrounded with woods. The laws of

eastern hospitality allowed them to enter, and the master welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was skilful enough in appearances soon to discern that they were no common guests, and spread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courtesy of the princess excited his respect. When they offered to depart he entreated their stay, and was the next day still more unwilling to dismiss them than before. They were easily persuaded to stop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now saw all the domestics cheerful, and all the face of nature smiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope he should find here what he was seeking; but when he was congratulating the master upon his possessions, he answered with a sigh, "My condition has indeed the appearance of happiness, but appearances are delusive. My prosperity puts my life in danger; the Bassa of Egypt is my enemy, incensed only by my wealth and popularity. I have hitherto been protected against him by the princes of the country; but as the favor of the great is uncertain, I know not how soon my defenders may be persuaded to share the plunder with the Bassa. I have sent my treasures into a distant country, and, upon the first alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my mansion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted."

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile; and the princess was so much

disturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation that she retired to her apartment.

They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HAPPINESS OF SOLITUDE. THE HERMIT'S
HISTORY.

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peasants, to the hermit's cell : it was a cavern in the side of a mountain overshadowed with palm trees ; at such a distance from the cataract that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, such as composed the mind to pensive meditation, especially when it was assisted by the wind whistling among the branches. The first rude essay of nature had been so much improved by human labor that the cave contained several apartments appropriated to different uses, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkness or tempests happened to overtake.

The hermit sat on a bench at the door to enjoy the coolness of the evening. On one side lay a book with pens and papers, on the other, mechanical instruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princess observed that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach the way to happiness.

They saluted him with great respect, which he repaid like a man not unaccustomed to the forms of courts. "My children," said he, "if you have lost

your way, you shall be willingly supplied with such conveniences for the night as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell."

They thanked him; and, entering, were pleased with the neatness and regularity of the place. The hermit set flesh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His discourse was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthusiasm. He soon gained the esteem of his guests, and the princess repented of her hasty censure.

At last Imlac began thus: "I do not now wonder that your reputation is so far extended: we have heard at Cairo of your wisdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the *choice of life*."

"To him that lives well," answered the hermit, "every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice than to remove from all apparent evil."

"He will remove most certainly from evil," said the prince, "who shall devote himself to that solitude which you have recommended by your example."

"I have indeed lived fifteen years in solitude," said the hermit, "but have no desire that my example should gain any imitators. In my youth I professed arms, and was raised by degrees to the highest military rank. I have traversed wide countries at the head of my troops, and seen many battles and sieges. At last, being disgusted by the prefer-

ments of a younger officer, and feeling that my vigor was beginning to decay, I resolved to close my life in peace, having found the world full of snares, discord, and misery. I had once escaped from the pursuit of the enemy by the shelter of this cavern, and therefore chose it for my final residence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and stored it with all that I was likely to want.

“For some time after my retreat, I rejoiced like a tempest-beaten sailor at his entrance into the harbor, being delighted with the sudden change of the noise and hurry of war to stillness and repose. When the pleasures of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grew in the valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that inquiry is now grown tasteless and irksome. I have been for some time unsettled and distracted: my mind is disturbed with a thousand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, because I have no opportunities of relaxation or diversion. I am sometimes ashamed to think that I could not secure myself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue, and begin to suspect that I was rather impelled by resentment than led by devotion into solitude. My fancy riots in scenes of folly, and I lament that I have lost so much, and have gained so little. In solitude, if I escape the example of bad men, I want likewise the counsel and conversation of the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of society, and resolve to return into

the world to-morrow. The life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout."

They heard his resolution with surprise, but after a short pause offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a considerable treasure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE LED ACCORDING
TO NATURE.

RASSELAS went often to an assembly of learned men, who met at stated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were somewhat coarse, but their conversation was instructive, and their disputations acute, though sometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertist remembered upon what question they began. Some faults were almost general among them: every one was desirous to dictate to the rest, and every one was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him censure a course of life which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him a hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labor of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion from

duty. Others readily allowed, that there was a time when the claims of the public were satisfied, and when a man might properly sequester himself to review his life and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and perhaps, if shame did not restrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world; "For the hope of happiness," said he, "is so strongly impressed that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of the present state, whatever it be, we feel, and are forced to confess, the misery; yet, when the same state is again at a distance, imagination paints it as desirable. But the time will surely come, when desire will be no longer our tormentor, and no man shall be wretched but by his own fault."

"This," said a philosopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, "is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle than to inquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or impor-

tunities of desire : he will receive and reject with equability of temper ; and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions, or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wise by easier means : let them observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove : let them consider the life of animals whose motions are regulated by instinct : they obeyed their guide, and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, cease to dispute, and learn to live ; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, That deviation from nature is deviation from happiness."

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. " Sir," said the prince, with great modesty, " as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my closest attention has been fixed upon your discourse ; I doubt not the truth of a position which a man so learned has so confidently advanced. Let me only know what it is to live according to nature ?"

" When I find young men so humble and so docile," said the philosopher, " I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects : to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity ;

to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things."

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was silent; and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up, and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PRINCE AND HIS SISTER DIVIDE BETWEEN
THEM THE WORK OF OBSERVATION.

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments and further inquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observation and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why, though he had been hitherto frustrated, he might succeed at last.

“We have hitherto,” said she, “known but little of the world: we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power; and in this we have not yet seen the private recesses of domestic peace. Imlac favors not our search, lest we should in time find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us; you shall try what is to be found in the splendor of courts, and I will range the shades of humbler life,

Perhaps command and authority may be the supreme blessings, as they afford most opportunities of doing good ; or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modest habitations of middle fortune ; too low for great designs, and too high for penury and distress."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PRINCE EXAMINES THE HAPPINESS OF HIGH STATIONS.

RASSELAS applauded the design, and appeared next day with a splendid retinue at the court of the Bassa. He was soon distinguished for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whose curiosity had brought him from distant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent conversation with the Bassa himself.

He was at first inclined to believe, that the man must be pleased with his own condition whom all approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. "There can be no pleasure," said he, "equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thousands all made happy by wise administration. Yet, since by the law of subordination this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is surely reasonable to think that there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible, and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a single man, only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content."

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he

found no solution of the difficulty. But as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man who stood high in employment hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those who surrounded the Bassa were sent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering censure, and every eye was searching for a fault.

At last the letters of revocation arrived, the Bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

“What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power?” said Rasselas to his sister; “is it without any efficacy to good? or, is the subordinate degree only dangerous, and the supreme safe and glorious? Is the Sultan the only happy man in his dominions? or, is the Sultan himself subject to the torments of suspicion, and the dread of enemies?”

In a short time the second Bassa was deposed. The Sultan that had advanced him was murdered by the Janizaries, and his successor had other views and different favorites.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PRINCESS PURSUES HER INQUIRY WITH MORE
DILIGENCE THAN SUCCESS.

THE princess, in the mean time, insinuated herself into many families ; for there are few doors through which liberality, joined with good humor, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houses were airy and cheerful ; but Nekayah had been too long accustomed to the conversation of Imlac and her brother, to be much pleased with childish levity, and prattle which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wishes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleasures, poor as they were, could not be preserved pure, but were imbittered by petty competitions and worthless emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other ; of a quality to which solicitude can add nothing, and from which detraction can take nothing away. Many were in love with triflers like themselves, and many fancied that they were in love when in truth they were only idle. Their affection was not fixed on sense or virtue, and therefore seldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was transient : everything floated in their mind unconnected with the past or future, so

that one desire easily gave way to another, as a second stone cast into the water effaces and confounds the circles of the first.

With these girls she played as with inoffensive animals, and found them proud of her countenance, and weary of her company.

But her purpose was to examine more deeply, and her affability easily persuaded the hearts that were swelling with sorrow to discharge their secrets in her ear: and those whom hope flattered, or prosperity delighted, often courted her to partake their pleasures.

The princess and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private summer-house on the bank of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. "Answer," said she, "great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou waterest through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint!"

"You are then," said Rasselas, "not more successful in private houses than I have been in courts."

"I have, since the last partition of our provinces," said the princess, "enabled myself to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the fairest show of prosperity and peace, and know not one house that is **not** haunted by some fury that destroys their quiet. I **did** not seek ease among the poor, because

I concluded that there it could not be found. But I saw many poor, whom I had supposed to live in affluence. Poverty has, in large cities, very different appearances : it is often concealed in splendor, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the rest ; they support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for the morrow.

“ This, however, was an evil which, though frequent, I saw with less pain, because I could relieve it. Yet some have refused my bounties ; more offended with my quickness to detect their wants than pleased with my readiness to succor them, and others, whose exigencies compelled them to admit my kindness, have never been able to forgive their benefactress. Many, however, have been sincerely grateful, without the ostentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favors.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PRINCESS CONTINUES HER REMARKS UPON PRIVATE LIFE.

NEKAYAH, perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.

"In families, where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly discord: if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells us, a great family, a family likewise is a little kingdom, torn with factions and exposed to revolutions. An unpracticed observer expects the love of parents and children to be constant and equal; but this kindness seldom continues beyond the years of infancy; in a short time the children become rivals to their parents. Benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debased by envy.

"Parents and children seldom act in concert: each child endeavors to appropriate the esteem or fondness of the parents, and the parents, with yet less temptation, betray each other to their children: thus some place their confidence in the father, and some in the mother, and by degrees the house is filled with artifices and feuds.

"The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally opposite, by the contrary effects of hope and despondence, of expect-

ation and experience, without crime or folly on either side. The colors of life in youth and age appear different as the face of nature in spring and winter. And how can children credit the assertions of parents, which their own eyes show them to be false?

“ Few parents act in such a manner as much to enforce their maxims by the credit of their lives. The old man trusts wholly to slow contrivance and gradual progression: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigor, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man defies prudence: the youth commits himself to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openness and candor; but his father, having suffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to suspect, and too often allured to practice it. Age looks with anger on the temerity of youth, and youth with contempt on the scrupulosity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greatest part, live on to love less and less: and if those whom nature has thus closely united are the torments of each other, where shall we look for tenderness and consolation.”

“ Surely,” said the prince, “ you must have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the most tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural necessity.”

“ Domestic discord,” answered she, “ is not inevitably and fatally necessary; but yet it is not easy

to avoid. We seldom see that a whole family is virtuous; the good and evil cannot well agree; and the evil can yet less agree with one another; even the virtuous fall sometimes to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds and tending to extremes. In general those parents have most reverence that most deserve it: for he that lives well cannot be despised.

“Many other evils infest private life. Some are the slaves of servants whom they have trusted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety by the caprice of rich relations, whom they cannot please and dare not offend. Some husbands are imperious, and some wives perverse: and as it is always more easy to do evil than good, though the wisdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miserable.”

“If such be the general effect of marriage,” said the prince, “I shall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my interest with that of another, lest I should be unhappy by my partner’s fault.”

“I have met,” said the princess, “with many who live single for that reason; but I have never found that their prudence ought to raise envy. They dream away their time without friendship, without fondness, and are driven to rid themselves of the day, for which they have no use, by childish amusements or vicious delights. They act as beings under the constant sense of some known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancor; and their tongues with censure. They are peevish at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the

outlaws of human nature, make it their business and their pleasure to disturb that society which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting sympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity, is a state more gloomy than solitude ; it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."

"What, then, is to be done?" said Rasselas ; "the more we inquire the less we can resolve. Surely he is most likely to please himself that has no other inclination or regard."

CHAPTER XXVII.

DISQUISITION UPON GREATNESS.

THE conversation had a short pause. The prince, having considered his sister's observations, told her that she had surveyed life with prejudice and supposed misery where she did not find it. "Your narrative," says he, "throws yet a darker gloom upon the prospects of futurity; the predictions of Imlac were but faint sketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately convinced that quiet is not the daughter of grandeur or of power: that her presence is not to be bought by wealth, nor enforced by conquest. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compass, he must be more exposed to opposition from enmity, or miscarriage from chance; whoever has many to please or to govern must use the ministry of many agents, some of whom will be wicked, and some ignorant; by some he will be misled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one, he will offend another: those that are not favored will think themselves injured: and, since favors can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always discontented."

"The discontent," said the princess, "which is thus unreasonable, I hope that I shall always have spirit to despise, and you power to repress."

“Discontent,” answered Rasselas, “will not always be without reason under the most just and vigilant administration of public affairs. None however attentive, can always discover that merit which indulgence or faction may happen to obscure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet he that sees inferior desert advanced above him will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice; and, indeed, it can scarcely be hoped than any man, however magnanimous by nature, or exalted by condition, will be able to persist forever in the fixed and inexorable justice of distribution; he will sometimes indulge his own affections, and sometimes those of his favorites; he will permit some to please him who can never serve him; he will discover, in those whom he loves, qualities which in reality they do not possess; and to those, from whom he receives pleasure, he will in his turn endeavor to give it. Thus will recommendations sometimes prevail which were purchased by money, or by the more destructive bribery of flattery and servility.

“He that has much to do will do something wrong, and of that wrong must suffer the consequences; and if it were possible that he should always act rightly, yet when such numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will censure and obstruct him by malevolence, and the good sometimes by mistake.

“The highest stations cannot therefore hope to be abodes of happiness, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to seats of humble privacy and placid obscurity. For what can

hinder the satisfaction, or intercept the expectations, of him whose abilities are adequate to his employments, who sees with his own eyes the whole circuit of his influence, who chooses by his own knowledge all whom he trusts, and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous, and to be happy."

"Whether perfect happiness would be procured by perfect goodness," said Nekayah, "this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at least, may be maintained that we do not always find visible happiness in proportion to visible virtue. All natural and almost all political evils are incident alike to the bad and good; they are confounded in the misery of a famine, and not much distinguished in the fury of a faction; they sink together in a tempest, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, a steady prospect of a happier state; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience; but remember that patience must suppose pain."

CHAPTER XXIII.

RASSELAS AND NEKAYAH CONTINUE THEIR CONVERSATION.

“DEAR princess,” said Rasselas, “you fall into the common errors of exaggeratory declamation, by producing, in a familiar disquisition, examples of national calamities, and scenes of extensive misery, which are found in books rather than in the world, and which, as they are horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by misrepresentations. I cannot bear that querulous eloquence which threatens every city with a siege like that of Jerusalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locusts, and suspends pestilence on the wing of every blast that issues from the south.

“On necessary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all disputation is vain: when they happen, they must be endured. But it is evident that these bursts of universal distress are more dreaded than felt; thousands and ten thousands flourish in youth and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domestic evils, and share the same pleasures and vexations, whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their

country pursue their enemies or retreat before them. While courts are disturbed with intestine competitions, and ambassadors are negotiating in foreign countries, the smith still plies his anvil, and the husbandman drives his plow forward ; the necessaries of life are required and obtained ; and the successive business of the seasons continues to make its wonted revolutions.

“ Let use cease to consider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it shall happen, will laugh at human speculation. We will not endeavor to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the destiny of kingdoms. It is our business to consider what beings like us may perform ; each laboring for his own happiness by promoting within his circle, however narrow, the happiness of others.

“ Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature ; men and women are made to be companions of each other, and therefore I cannot be persuaded but that marriage is one of the means of happiness.”

“ I know not,” said the princess, “ whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human misery. When I see and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected causes of lasting discord, the diversities of temper, the oppositions of opinion, the rude collisions of contrary desire where both are urged by violent impulses, the obstinate contests of disagreeable virtues where both are supported by consciousness of good intention, I am sometimes disposed to think, with the severer casuists of most nations, that marriage is rather

permitted than approved, and that none, but by the instigation of a passion too much indulged, entangle themselves with indissoluble compacts."

"You seem to forget," replied Rasselas, "that you have, even now, represented celibacy as less happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worst. Thus it happens when wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually destroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth.

"I did not expect," answered the princess, "to hear that imputed to falsehood which is the consequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare with exactness objects vast in their extent, and various in their parts. Where we see or conceive the whole at once, we readily note the discriminations, and decide the preference; but of two systems, of which neither can be surveyed by any human being in its full compass of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder that, judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other, as either presses on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourselves just as we differ from each other, when we see only parts of the question, as in the multifarious relations of politics and morality; but when we perceive the whole at once, as numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion."

"Let us not add," said the prince, "to the other evils of life the bitterness of controversy, nor endeavor to vie with each other in subtilities of argument. We are employed in a search, of which both are

equally to enjoy the success, or suffer by the miscarriage. It is therefore fit that we assist each other. You surely conclude too hastily from the infelicity of marriage against its institution: will not the misery of life prove equally that life cannot be the gift of Heaven? The world must be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it."

"How the world is to be peopled," returned Nekayah, "is not my care, and needs not be yours. I see no danger that the present generation should omit to leave successors behind them; we are not now inquiring for the world, but for ourselves."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DEBATE OF MARRIAGE CONTINUED.

“THE good of the whole,” says Rasselas, “is the same with the good of all its parts. If marriage be best for mankind, it must be evidently best for individuals, or a permanent and necessary duty must be the cause of evil, and some must be inevitably sacrificed to the convenience of others. In the estimate which you have made of the two states, it appears that the inconveniences of a single life are, in a great measure, necessary and certain, but those of the conjugal state accidental and avoidable.

“I cannot forbear to flatter myself, that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cause of general complaint. What can be expected but disappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardor of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions, similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment?

“Such is the common process of marriage. A youth or maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another.

Having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry, and discover what nothing but voluntary blindness before had concealed; they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

“From those early marriages proceeds likewise the rivalry of parents and children: the son is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing to forsake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wish for the absence of the other.

“Surely all these evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence prescribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleasures life may be well enough supported without the help of a partner. Longer time will increase experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and selection; one advantage at least, will be certain; the parents will be visibly older than their children.”

“What reason cannot collect,” said Nekayah, “and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a question too important to be neglected, and I have often proposed it to those whose accuracy of remark and comprehensiveness of knowledge made their suffrages worthy of regard. They have gener-

ally determined that it is dangerous for a man and woman to suspend their fate upon each other, at a time when opinions are fixed, and habits are established; when friendships have been contracted on both sides, when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own prospects.

“ It is scarcely possible that two, travelling through the world, under the conduct of chance, should have been both directed to the same path, and it will not often happen that either will quit the track which custom has made pleasing. When the desultory levity of youth has settled into regularity, it is soon succeeded by pride ashamed to yield, or obstinacy delighting to contend. And even though mutual esteem produces mutual desire to please, time itself, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewise the direction of the passions, and give an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long customs are not easily broken: he that attempts to change the course of his own life very often labors in vain: and how shall we do that for others which we are seldom able to do for ourselves? ”

“ But surely,” interposed the prince, “ you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason? ”

“ Thus it is,” said Nekayah, “ that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude

investigation, and make logic ridiculous ; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. Consider the state of mankind, and inquire how few can be supposed to act upon any occasions, whether small or great, with all the reasons of action present to their minds. Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason, every morning, all the minute detail of a domestic day.

“ Those who marry at an advanced age will probably escape the encroachments of their children ; but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpless, to a guardian’s mercy : or, if that should not happen, they must at least go out of the world before they see those whom they love best either wise or great.

“ From their children, if they have less to fear, they have less also to hope ; and they lose, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the convenience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds susceptible of new impressions, which might wear away their dissimilitudes by long cohabitation ; as soft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their surfaces to each other.

“ I believe it will be found that those who marry late are best pleased with their children, and those who marry early with their partners.”

“ The union of these two affections,” said Rasselas, “ would produce all that could be wished. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them, a

time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the husband."

"Every hour," answered the princess, "confirms my prejudice in favor of the position so often uttered by the mouth of Imlac, 'That nature sets her gifts on the right hand and on the left.' Those conditions, which flatter hope and attract desire, are so constituted, that, as we approach one we recede from another. There are goods so opposed that we cannot seize both, but, by too much prudence, may pass between them at too great a distance to reach either, This is often the fate of long consideration ; he does nothing who endeavors to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourself with contrarieties of pleasure. Of the blessings set before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taste the fruits of autumn while he is delighting his scent with the flowers of spring : no man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile."

CHAPTER XXX.

IMLAC ENTERS, AND CHANGES THE CONVERSATION.

HERE Imlac entered and interrupted them. "Imlac," said Rasselas, "I have been taking from the princess the dismal history of private life, and am almost discouraged from further search."

"It seems to me," said Imlac, "that while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a single city, which, however large and diversified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestic life.

"The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power, before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders, and from the wonders which time has spared, we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed."

"My curiosity," said Rasselas, "does not very strongly lead me to survey the piles of stone or

mounds of earth; my business is with man. I came hither not to measure fragments of temples, or trace choked aqueducts, but to look upon the various scenes of the present world."

"The things that are now before us," said the princess, "require attention and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whose form of life was different from all that the present condition of man requires or allows?"

"To know anything," returned the poet, "we must know its effects; to see men we must see their works that we may learn what reason has dictated, or passion has incited, and find what are the most powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the present, we must oppose it to the past; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments. Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief the past is the object, and the future of hope and fear; even love and hatred respect the past, for the cause must have been before the effect.

"The present state of things is the consequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire what were the sources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent: if we are intrusted with the care of others, it is not just,

✓ Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may be properly charged with evil who refused to learn how he might prevent it.

“There is no part of history so generally useful as that which relates the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resuscitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invasions are peculiarly the business of princes, the useful or elegant arts are not to be neglected; those who have kingdoms to govern have understandings to cultivate.

“Example is always more efficacious than precept. A soldier is formed in war, and a painter must copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are seldom seen, but the labors of art are always at hand for those who desire to know what art has been able to perform.

“When the eye or the imagination is struck with an uncommon work, the next transition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true use of such contemplation; we enlarge our comprehension by new ideas, and perhaps recover some art lost to mankind, or learn what is less perfectly known in our own country. At least we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the first motion towards good, discover our defects.”

“I am willing,” said the prince, “to see all that

can deserve my search." "And I," said the princess, "shall rejoice to learn something of the manners of antiquity."

"The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry," said Imlac, "are the Pyramids; fabrics raised before the time of history, and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these the greatest is still standing, very little injured by time."

"Let us visit them to-morrow," said Nekayah. "I have often heard of the Pyramids, and shall not rest until I have seen them within and without with my own eyes."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THEY VISIT THE PYRAMIDS.

THE resolution being taken, they set out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being resolved to stay among the Pyramids till their curiosity was fully satisfied. They travelled gently, turned aside to everything remarkable, stopped from time to time and conversed with the inhabitants, and observed the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great Pyramid, they were astonished at the extent of the base, and the height of the top. Imlac explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidical form was chosen for a fabric intended to co-extend its duration with that of the world: he showed that its gradual diminution gave it such stability as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could scarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themselves, the least resistible of natural violence. A concussion that should shatter the Pyramid would threaten the dissolution of the continent.

They measured all its dimensions, and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interior apartments; and having hired the

common guides, climbed up to the first passage, when the favorite of the princess, looking into the cavity, stepped back and trembled. "Pekuah," said the princess, "of what art thou afraid?" "Of the narrow entrance," answered the lady, "and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which must surely be inhabited by unquiet souls. The original possessors of these dreadful vaults will start up before us, and perhaps shut us in forever." She spoke, and threw her arms round the neck of her mistress.

"If all your fear be of apparitions," said the prince, "I will promise you safety; there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be seen no more."

"That the dead are seen no more," said Imlac, "I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears.

"Yet I do not mean to add new terrors to those which have already seized upon Pekuah. There can be no reason why specters should haunt the Pyramid more than other places, or why they should have

power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our entrance is no violation of their privileges ; we can take nothing from them, how then can we offend them ?”

“ My dear Pekuah,” said the princess, “ I will always go before you, and Imlac shall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the princess of Abyssinia.”

“ If the princess is pleased that her servant should die,” returned the lady, “ let her command some death less dreadful than enclosure in this horrid cavern ; you know I dare not disobey you ; I must go if you command me ; but, if I once enter, I never shall come back.”

The princess saw that her fear was too strong for expostulation or reproof ; and, embracing her, told her that she should stay in the tent till their return. Pekuah was yet not satisfied, but entreated the princess not to pursue so dreadful a purpose as that of entering the recesses of the Pyramid. “ Though I cannot teach courage,” said Nekayah, “ I must not learn cowardice ; nor leave at last undone what I came hither only to do.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

THEY ENTER THE PYRAMID.

PEKUAH descended to the tents, and the rest entered the Pyramid: they passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the chest in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been repositied. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers to rest awhile before they attempted to return.

“ We have now,” said Imlac, “ gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China.

“ Of the wall it is very easy to assign the motive. It secured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incursions of barbarians, whose unskilfulness in the arts made it easier for them to supply their wants by rapine than by industry, and who from time to time poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce, as vultures descend upon domestic fowl. Their celerity and fierceness rendered the wall necessary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

“ But for the Pyramids no reason has ever been given adequate to the cost and labor of the work. The narrowness of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and

treasures might have been repositied at far less expense with equal security. It seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life, and must be always appeased by some employment. Those who have already all that they can enjoy must enlarge their desires. He that has built for use till use is supplied, must begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmost power of human performance, that he may not be soon reduced to form another wish.

“ I consider this mighty structure as a monument of the insufficiency of human enjoyments. A king, whose power is unlimited, and whose treasures surmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to solace, by the erection of a Pyramid, the satiety of dominion and tastelessness of pleasures, and to amuse the tediousness of declining life, by seeing thousands laboring without end, and one stone, for no purpose, laid upon another. Whoever thou art that, not content with a moderate condition, imaginest happiness in royal magnificence, and dreamest that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty with perpetual gratifications, survey the Pyramids, and confess thy folly.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PRINCESS MEETS WITH AN UNEXPECTED
MISFORTUNE.

THEY rose up, and returned through the cavity at which they had entered, and the princess prepared for her favorite a long narrative of dark labyrinths and costly rooms, and of the different impressions which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But when they came to their train, they found every one silent and dejected; the men discovered shame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in the tents.

What had happened they did not try to conjecture, but immediately inquired. "You had scarcely entered into the Pyramid," said one of the attendants, "when a troop of Arabs rushed upon us: we were too few to resist them, and too slow to escape. They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen put them to flight; but they seized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried her away; the Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them."

The princess was overpowered with surprise and

grief. Rasselas, in the first heat of his resentment, ordered his servants to follow him, and prepared to pursue the robbers with his saber in his hand. "Sir," said Imlac, "what can you hope from violence or valor? the Arabs are mounted on horses trained to battle and retreat; we have only beasts of burden. By leaving our present station we may lose the princess, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah."

In a short time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princess burst out into new lamentations, and Rasselas could scarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion that the escape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for perhaps they would have killed their captives rather than have resigned them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THEY RETURN TO CAIRO WITHOUT PEKUAH.

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer stay. They returned to Cairo, repenting of their curiosity, censuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own rashness; which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients by which the loss of Pekuah might have been prevented, and resolving to do something for her recovery, though none could find anything proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her that all had their troubles, and that lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happiness in the world for a long time, and might reasonably expect a change of fortune. They hoped that some good would befall her wheresoever she was, and that their mistress would find another friend who might supply her place.

The princess made them no answer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favorite was lost.

Next day the prince presented to the Bassa a memorial of the wrong which he had suffered, and a petition for redress. The Bassa, threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor

indeed could any account or description be given by which he might direct the pursuit.

It soon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors being accustomed to hear of more crimes than they can punish, and more wrongs than they can redress, set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence, and presently forget the request when they lose sight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavored to gain some intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the Arabs, and to regular correspondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of these, some were furnished with money for their journey and came back no more; some were liberally paid for accounts which a few days discovered to be false. But the princess would not suffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While she was doing something, she kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was suggested; when one messenger returned unsuccessful, another was despatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now passed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard; the hopes which they had endeavored to raise in each other grew more languid; and the princess, when she saw nothing more to be tried, sunk down inconsolable in hopeless dejection. A thousand times she reproached herself with the easy compliance by which she permitted her favorite to stay behind her. "Had not my fondness," said she, "lessened my authority, Pekuah had not dared

to talk of her terrors. She ought to have feared me more than spectres. A severe look would have overpowered her; a peremptory command would have compelled obedience. Why did foolish indulgence prevail upon me? Why did I not speak, and refuse to hear?"

"Great princess," said Imlac, "do not reproach yourself for your virtue, or consider that as blamable by which evil has accidentally been caused. Your tenderness for the timidity of Pekuah was generous and kind. When we act according to our duty, we commit the event to Him by whose laws our actions are governed, and who will suffer none to be finally punished for obedience. When, in prospect of some good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules prescribed us, we withdraw from the direction of superior wisdom, and take all consequences upon ourselves. Man cannot so far know the connection of causes and events, as that he may venture to do wrong in order to do right. When we pursue our end by lawful means, we may always console our miscarriage by the hope of future recompense.

"When we consult only our own policy, and attempt to find a nearer way to good, by overleaping the settled boundaries of right and wrong, we cannot be happy even by success, because we cannot escape the consciousness of our fault: but, if we miscarry, the disappointment is irremediably embittered. How comfortless is the sorrow of him who feels at once the pangs of guilt, and the vexation of calamity which guilt has brought upon him!

“Consider, princess, what would have been your condition, if the lady Pekuah had entreated to accompany you, and, being compelled to stay in the tents, had been carried away ; or how you would have borne the thought if you had forced her into the Pyramid, and she had died before you in agonies of terror ? ”

“Had either happened,” said Nekayah, “I could not have endured life till now : I should have been tortured to madness by the remembrance of such cruelty, or must have pined away in abhorrence of myself.”

“This, at least,” said Imlac, “is the present reward of virtuous conduct, that no unlucky consequence can oblige us to repent it.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PRINCESS LANGUISHES FOR WANT OF PEKUAH.

NEKAYAH, being thus reconciled to herself, found that no evil is insupportable but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong. She was from that time delivered from the violence of tempestuous sorrow, and sunk into silent pensiveness and gloomy tranquillity. She sat from morning to evening recollecting all that had been done or said by her Pekuah, treasured up with care every trifle on which Pekuah had set an accidental value, and which might recall to mind any little incident or careless conversation. The sentiments of her, whom she now expected to see no more, were treasured in her memory as rules of life, and she deliberated to no other end than to conjecture on any occasion what would have been the opinion and counsel of Pekuah.

The woman by whom she was attended knew nothing of her real condition, and therefore she could not talk to them but with caution and reserve. She began to remit her curiosity, having no great desire to collect notions which she had not convenience of uttering. Rasselas endeavored first to comfort, and afterwards to divert her; he hired musicians, to whom she seemed to listen, but did not hear them; and pro-

cured masters to instruct her in various arts, whose lectures, when they visited her again, were again to be repeated. She had lost her taste of pleasure and her ambition of excellence. And her mind, though forced into short excursions, always recurred to the image of her friend.

Imlac was every morning earnestly enjoined to renew his inquiries, and was asked every night whether he had yet heard of Pekuah, till, not being able to return the princess the answer that she desired, he was less and less willing to come into her presence. She observed his backwardness, and commanded him to attend her. "You are not," said she, "to confound impatience with resentment, or to suppose that I charge you with negligence, because I repine at your unsuccessfulness. I do not much wonder at your absence: I know that the unhappy are never pleasing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of misery. To hear complaints is wearisome alike to the wretched and the happy: for who would cloud, by adventitious grief, the short gleams of gayety which life allows us? or who, that is struggling under his own evils, will add to them the miseries of another?"

"The time is at hand when none shall be disturbed any longer by the sighs of Nekayah: my search after happiness is now at an end. I am resolved to retire from the world with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myself in solitude without any other care than to compose my thoughts, and regulate my hours by a constant succession of innocent occupations, till,

with a mind purified from all earthly desires, I shall enter into that state to which all are hastening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendship of Pekuah."

"Do not entangle your mind," said Imlac, "by irrevocable determinations, nor increase the burden of life by a voluntary accumulation of misery; the weariness of retirement will continue or increase when the loss of Pekuah is forgotten. That you have been deprived of one pleasure is no very good reason for rejection of the rest."

"Since Pekuah was taken from me," said the princess, "I have no pleasure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or trust has little to hope. She wants the radical principle of happiness. We may, perhaps, allow, that what satisfaction this world can afford must arise from the conjunction of wealth knowledge, and goodness: wealth is nothing but as it is bestowed, and knowledge nothing but as it is communicated: they must therefore be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them? Goodness affords the only comfort which can be enjoyed without a partner and goodness may be practised in retirement."

"How far solitude may admit goodness, or advance it, I shall not," replied Imlac, "dispute at present. Remember the confession of the pious hermit. You will wish to return into the world when the image of your companion has left your thoughts."

"That time," said Nekayah, "will never come. The generous frankness, the modest obsequiousness,

and the faithful secrecy of my dear Pekuah will always be more missed as I shall live longer to see vice and folly."

"The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity," said Imlac, "is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new-created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled: yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured nature will find the means of reparation. Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye; and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion: commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favorite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation."

"At least," said the prince, "do not despair before all remedies have been tried; the inquiry after the unfortunate lady is still continued, and shall be

carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition that you will promise to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable resolution."

Nekayah thought this a reasonable demand, and made the promise to her brother, who had been advised by Imlac to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah ; but he supposed, that if he could secure the interval of a year, the princess would then be in no danger of a cloister.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PEKUAH IS STILL REMEMBERED. THE PROGRESS
OF SORROW.

NEKAYAH, seeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favorite, and having, by her promise, set her intention of retirement at a distance, began imperceptibly to return to common cares and common pleasures. She rejoiced without her own consent at the suspension of her sorrows, and sometimes caught herself with indignation in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her, whom she yet resolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondness of Pekuah, and for some weeks retired constantly at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes swollen and her countenance clouded. By degrees she grew less scrupulous, and suffered any important and pressing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to less occasions ; sometimes forgot what she was indeed afraid to remember, and at last wholly released herself from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was not yet diminished. A thousand occurrences brought her back to memory, and a thousand wants, which nothing but the

confidence of friendship can supply, made her frequently regretted. She therefore solicited Imlac never to desist from inquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that at least she might have the comfort of knowing that she did not suffer by negligence or sluggishness. "Yet what," said she, "is to be expected from our pursuit of happiness, when we find the state of life to be such, that happiness itself is the cause of misery? Why should we endeavor to attain that of which the possession cannot be secured. I shall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondness, however tender, lest I should lose again what I have lost in Pekuah."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PRINCESS HEARS NEWS OF PEKUAH.

IN seven months, one of the messengers, who had been sent away upon the day when the promise was drawn from the princess, returned, after many unsuccessful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hand of an Arab chief, who possessed a castle or fortress on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whose revenue was plunder, was willing to restore her with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The price was no subject of debate. The princess was in ecstasies when she heard that her favorite was alive, and might so cheaply be ransomed. She could not not think of delaying for a moment Pekuah's happiness or her own, but entreated her brother to send back the messenger with the sum required. Imlac being consulted was not very confident of the veracity of the relator, and was still more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally trusted, detain at once the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themselves in the power of the Arab, by going into his district, and could not expect that the rover would so much expose himself as to come into the lower country, where he might be seized by the forces of the Bassa.

It is difficult to negotiate where neither will trust. But Imlac, after some deliberation, directed the messenger to propose that Pekuah should be conducted by ten horsemen to the monastery of St. Antony, which is situated in the deserts of Upper Egypt, where she should be met by the same number, and her ransom should be paid.

That no time might be lost, as they expected that the proposal would not be refused, they immediately began their journey to the monastery ; and when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former messenger to the Arab's fortress. Rasselas was desirous to go with them ; but neither his sister nor Imlac would consent. The Arab, according to the custom of his nation, observed the laws of hospitality with great exactness to those who put themselves into his power, and, in a few days brought Pekuah with her maids, by easy journeys, to the place appointed, where, receiving the stipulated price, he restored her with great respect to liberty and her friends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo, beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princess and her favorite embraced each other with transport too violent to be expressed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderness in secret, and exchange professions of kindness and gratitude. After a few hours they returned into the refectory of the convent, where, in the presence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required of Pekuah the history of her adventures.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE LADY PEKUAH.

“AT what time and in what manner I was forced away,” said Pekuah, “your servants have told you. The suddenness of the event struck me with surprise, and I was at first rather stupefied than agitated with any passion of either fear or sorrow. My confusion was increased by the speed and tumult of our flight, while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it seemed, soon despaired to overtake us, or were afraid of those whom they made a show of menacing.

“When the Arabs saw themselves out of danger they slackened their course, and as I was less harassed by external violence, I began to feel more uneasiness in my mind. After some time we stopped near a spring, shaded with trees, in a pleasant meadow, where we were set upon the ground, and offered such refreshments as our masters were partaking. I was suffered to sit with my maids apart from the rest, and none attempted to comfort or insult us. Here I first began to feel the full weight of my misery. The girls sat weeping in silence, and from time to time looked on me for succor. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or

whence to draw any hope of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers and savages and had no reason to suppose that their pity was more than their justice, or that they would forbear the gratification of any ardor of desire or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kissed my maids, and endeavored to pacify them by remarking, that we were yet treated with decency, and that, since we were now carried beyond pursuit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

“ When we were to be set again on horseback, my maids clung round me, and refused to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate those who had us in their power. We travelled the remaining part of the day through an unfrequented and pathless country, and came by moonlight to the side of a hill, where the rest of the troop was stationed. Their tents were pitched and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed as a man much beloved by his dependants.

“ We were received into a large tent, where we found women who had attended their husbands in the expedition. They set before us the supper which they had provided, and I ate it rather to encourage my maids than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away they spread the carpets for repose. I was weary, and hoped to find in sleep that remission of distress which nature seldom denies. Ordering myself therefore to be undressed, I observed that the women looked very earnestly upon me, not expecting, I suppose, to see me so submissively attended. When my upper vest

was taken off, they were apparently struck with the splendor of my clothes, and one of them timorously laid her hand upon the embroidery. She then went out, and in a short time came back with another woman, who seemed to be of higher rank and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the usual act of reverence, and, taking me by the hand, placed me in a smaller tent, spread with finer carpets, where I spent the night quietly with my maids.

“In the morning, as I was sitting on the grass, the chief of the troop came towards me. I rose up to receive him, and he bowed with great respect. ‘Illustrious lady,’ said he, ‘my fortune is better than I had presumed to hope; I am told by my women, that I have a princess in my camp.’—‘Sir, answered I, ‘your women have deceived themselves and you; I am not a princess, but an unhappy stranger who intended soon to have left this country, in which I am now to be imprisoned forever.’—‘Whoever, or whencesoever you are,’ returned the Arab, ‘your dress, and that of your servants, show your rank to be high, and your wealth to be great. Why should you, who can so easily procure your ransom, think yourself in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpose of my incursions is to increase my riches, or, more properly, to gather tribute. The sons of Ishmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is usurped by late invaders and low-born tyrants, from whom we are compelled to take by the sword what is denied to justice. The violence of war admits no distinction; the lance, that

is lifted at guilt and power, will sometimes fall on innocence and gentleness."

" 'How little,' said I, 'did I expect that yesterday it should have fallen upon me!'

" 'Misfortunes,' answered the Arab, 'should always be expected. If the eye of hostility could learn reverence or pity, excellence like yours had been exempt from injury. But the angels of affliction spread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean. Do not be disconsolate: I am not one of the lawless and cruel rovers of the desert; I know the rules of civil life: I will fix your ransom, give a passport to your messenger, and perform my stipulation with nice punctuality.'

" You will easily believe that I was pleased with his courtesy: and, finding that his predominant passion was desire of money, I began now to think my danger less, for I knew that no sum would be thought too great for the release of Pekuah. I told him that he should have no reason to charge me with ingratitude, if I was used with kindness, and that any ransom which could be expected from a maid of common rank, would be paid, but that he must not persist to rate me as a princess. He said he would consider what he should demand, and then, smiling, bowed and retired.

" Soon after the women came about me, each contending to be more officious than the other, and my maids themselves were served with reverence. We travelled onward by short journeys. On the fourth day the chief told me, that my ransom must be two

hundred ounces of gold ; which I not only promised him, but told him that I would add fifty more, if I and my maids were honorably treated.

“ I never knew the power of gold before. From that time I was the leader of the troop. The march of every day was longer or shorter as I commanded, and the tents were pitched where I chose to rest. We now had camels and other conveniences for travel, my own women were always at my side, and I amused myself with observing the manners of the vagrant nations, and with viewing remains of ancient edifices, with which these deserted countries appear to have been, in some distant age, lavishly embellished.

“ The chief of the band was a man far from illiterate : he was able to travel by the stars or the compass, and had marked, in his erratic expeditions, such places as are most worthy the notice of a passenger. He observed to me, that buildings are always best preserved in places little frequented and difficult of access ; for, when once a country declines from its primitive splendor, the more inhabitants are left, the quicker ruin will be made. Walls supply stones more easily than quarries, and palaces and temples will be demolished, to make stables of granite, and cottages of porphyry.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ADVENTURES OF PEKUAH CONTINUED.

“ WE wandered about in this manner for some weeks, whether, as our chief pretended, for my gratification, or, as I rather suspected, for some convenience of his own. I endeavored to appear contented where sullenness and resentment would have been of no use, and that endeavor conduced much to the calmness of my mind; but my heart was always with Nekayah, and the troubles of the night much overbalanced the amusements of the day. My women, who threw all their cares upon their mistress, set their minds at ease from the time when they saw me treated with respect, and gave themselves up to the incidental alleviations of our fatigue without solicitude or sorrow. I was pleased with their pleasure, and animated with their confidence. My condition had lost much of its terror, since I found that the Arab ranged the country merely for riches. Avarice is a uniform and tractable vice: other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind; that which soothes the pride of one will offend the pride of another; but to the favor of the covetous there is a ready way; bring money, and nothing is denied.

“At last we came to the dwelling of our chief, a strong and spacious house built with stone in an island of the Nile, which lies, as I was told, under the tropic. ‘Lady,’ said the Arab, ‘you shall rest after your journey a few weeks in this place, where you are to consider yourself as sovereign. My occupation is war: I have therefore chosen this obscure residence, from which I can issue unexpected, and to which I can retire unpursued. You may now repose in security: here are few pleasures, but here is no danger.’ He then led me into the inner apartments, and, seating me on the richest couch, bowed to the ground. His woman, who considered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but being soon informed that I was a great lady detained only for my ransom, they began to vie with each other in obsequiousness and reverence.

“Being again comforted with new assurances of speedy liberty, I was for some days diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great distance, and afforded a view of many windings of the stream. In the day I wandered from one place to another, as the course of the sun varied the splendor of the prospect, and saw many things which I had never seen before. The crocodiles and river-horses are common in this unpeopled region, and I often looked upon them with terror, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For some time I expected to see mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told me, the European travellers have stationed in the Nile; but no such beings

ever appeared, and the Arab, when I inquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

"At night, the Arab always attended me to a tower set apart for celestial observations, where he endeavored to teach me the names and courses of the stars. I had no great inclination to this study, but an appearance of attention was necessary to please my instructor, who valued himself for his skill; and, in a little while, I found some employment requisite to beguile the tediousness of time, which was to be passed always amidst the same objects. I was weary of looking in the morning on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening; I therefore was at last willing to observe the stars rather than do nothing, but could not always compose my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah, when others imagined me contemplating the sky. Soon after the Arab went upon another expedition, and then my only pleasure was to talk with my maids about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happiness that we should all enjoy at the end of our captivity."

"There were women in your Arab's fortress," said the princess, "why did you not make them your companions, enjoy their conversation, and partake their diversions? In a place where they found business or amusement, why should you alone sit corroded with idle melancholy? or why could not you bear for a few months that condition to which they were condemned for life?"

"The diversions of the women," answered Pekuah,

“were only childish play, by which the mind, accustomed to stronger operations, could not be kept busy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely sensitive, while my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran from room to room, as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the sake of motion, as lambs frisk in a meadow. One sometimes pretended to be hurt, that the rest might be alarmed; or hid herself, that another might seek. Part of their time passed in watching the progress of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the sky.

“Their business was only needlework, in which I and my maids sometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will easily straggle from the fingers, nor will you suspect that captivity and absence from Nekayah could receive solace from silken flowers.

“Nor was much satisfaction to be hoped from their conversation; for of what could they be expected to talk? They had seen nothing: for they had lived from early youth in that narrow spot: of what they had not seen they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and had hardly names for anything but their clothes and their food. As I bore a superior character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amused me to hear the complaints of each against the rest, I might have been often detained by long stories; but the motives

of their animosity were so small that I could not listen without interrupting the tale."

"How," said Rasselas, "can the Arab, whom you represented as a man of more than common accomplishments, take any pleasure in his seraglio, when it is filled only with women like these? Are they exquisitely beautiful?"

"They do not," said Pekuah, "want that unaffected and ignoble beauty which may subsist without sprightliness or sublimity, without energy of thought or dignity of virtue. But to a man like the Arab such beauty was only a flower casually plucked and carelessly thrown away. Whatever pleasures he might find among them, they were not those of friendship or society. When they were playing about him, he looked on them with inattentive superiority; when they vied for his regard, he sometimes turned away disgusted. As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediousness of life; as they had no choice, their fondness, or appearance of fondness, excited in him neither pride nor gratitude: he was not exalted in his own esteem by the smiles of a woman who saw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard, of which he could never know the sincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted, not so much to delight him as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careless distribution of superfluous time, such love as man can bestow upon that which he despises, such as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow."

"You have reason, lady, to think yourself happy," said Imlac, "that you have been thus easily dismissed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge, be willing, in an intellectual famine, to lose such a banquet as Pekuah's conversation?"

"I am inclined to believe," answered Pekuah, "that he was for some time in suspense; for notwithstanding his promise, whenever I proposed to dispatch a messenger to Cairo, he found some excuse for delay. While I was detained in his house he made many excursions into the neighboring countries, and, perhaps, he would have refused to discharge me, had his plunder been equal to his wishes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my observations, and endeavored to advance my acquaintance with the stars. When I importuned him to send away my letters, he soothed me with professions of honor and sincerity: and, when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his absence. I was much afflicted by this studied procrastination, and was sometimes afraid that I should be forgotten; that you would leave Cairo, and I must end my days in an island of the Nile.

"I grew at last hopeless and dejected, and cared so little to entertain him that he for a while more frequently talked with my maids. That he should fall in love with them, or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleased with the growing friendship. My anxiety was not long; for, as I recovered some degree of cheerfulness, he

returned to me, and I could not forbear to despise my former uneasiness.

“He still delayed to send for my ransom, and would, perhaps never have determined, had not your agent found his way to him. The gold, which he would not fetch, he could not reject when it was offered. He hastened to prepare for our journey hither, like a man delivered from the pain of an intestine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the house, who dismissed me with cold indifference.”

Nekayah, having heard her favorite's relation, rose and embraced her ; and Rasselas gave her a hundred ounces of gold, which she presented to the Arab for the fifty that were promised.

CHAPTER XL.

THE HISTORY OF A MAN OF LEARNING.

THEY returned to Cairo, and were so well pleased at finding themselves together that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to love learning, and one day declared to Imlac, that he intended to devote himself to science, and pass the rest of his days in literary solitude.

“Before you make your final choice,” answered Imlac, you ought to examine its hazards, and converse with some of those who are grown old in the company of themselves. I have just left the observatory of one of the most learned astronomers in the world, who has spent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celestial bodies, and has drawn out his soul in endless calculations. He admits a few friends once a month to hear his deductions and enjoy his discoveries. I was introduced as a man of knowledge worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas and fluent conversation are commonly welcome to those whose thoughts have been long fixed upon a single point, and who find the images of other things stealing away. I delighted him with my remarks; he smiled at the narrative of my travels; and was glad to forget the constella-

tions, and descend for a moment into the lower world.

“On the next day of vacation I renewed my visit, and was so fortunate as to please him again. He relaxed from that time the severity of his rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always busy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was desirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had every day more of his confidence, and always found new cause of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and retentive, his discourse is methodical, and his expression clear.

“His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepest researches and most favorite studies are willingly interrupted for an opportunity of doing good by his counsel or his riches. To his closest retreat, at his most busy moments, all are admitted that want his assistance: ‘For, though I exclude idleness and pleasure, ‘I will never,’ says he, ‘bar my doors against charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded.’”

“Surely,” said the princess, “this man is happy.”

“I visited him,” said Imlac, “with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamored of his conversation; he was sublime without haughtiness, courteous without formality, and communicative without ostentation. I was at first, great princess, of your opinion, thought him the happiest of man-

kind, and often congratulated him on the blessing that he enjoyed. He seemed to hear nothing with indifference but the praises of his condition, to which he always returned a general answer, and diverted the conversation to some other topic.

“Amidst this willingness to be pleased and labor to please, I had quickly reason to imagine that some painful sentiment pressed upon his mind. He often looked up earnestly towards the sun, and let his voice fall in the midst of his discourse. He would sometimes, when we were alone, gaze upon me in silence with the air of a man who longed to speak what he was yet resolved to suppress. He would often send for me, with vehement injunctions of haste, though, when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to say. And sometimes, when I was leaving him, he would call me back, pause a few moments, and then dismiss me.”

CHAPTER XLI.

THE ASTRONOMER DISCOVERS THE CAUSE OF HIS UNEASINESS.

“AT last the time came when the secret burst his reserve. We were sitting together last night in the turret of his huse, watching the emersion of a satellite of Jupiter. A sudden tempest clouded the sky, and disappointed our observation. We sat a while silent in the dark, and then he addressed himself to me in these words:—‘Imlac, I have long considered thy friendship as the greatest blessing of my life. Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requisite for trust, benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long discharged an office which I must soon quit at the call of nature, and shall rejoice, in the hour of imbecility and pain, to devolve it upon thee.’

“I thought myself honored by this testimony, and protested, that whatever would conduce to his happiness would add likewise to mine.

“‘Hear, Imlac, what thou wilt not without difficulty credit. I have possessed for five years the regulation of the weather and the distribution of the seasons; the sun has listened to my dictates, and

passed from tropic to tropic by my direction; the clouds, at my call, have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command; I have restrained the rage of the dog-star, and mitigated the fervors of the crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have hitherto refused my authority, and multitudes have perished by equinoctial tempest, which I have found myself unable to prohibit or restrain. I have administered this great office with exact justice, and made to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine. What must have been the misery of half the globe if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the sun to either side of the equator? ” ”

CHAPTER XLII.

THE OPINION OF THE ASTRONOMER IS EXPLAINED
AND JUSTIFIED.

“I SUPPOSE he discovered in me, through the obscurity of the room, some tokens of amazement and doubt, for, after a short pause, he proceeded thus :

“‘Not to be easily credited will neither surprise nor offend me ; for I am, probably, the first of human beings to whom this trust has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem the distinction a reward or punishment ; since I have possessed it I have been far less happy than before, and nothing but the consciousness of good intention could have enabled me to support the weariness of unremitted vigilance.’

“‘How long, sir,’ said I, ‘has this great office been in your hands?’

“‘About ten years ago,’ said he, ‘my daily observations of the changes of the sky led me to consider whether, if I had the power of the seasons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation fastened upon my mind and I sat days and nights in imaginary dominion, pouring upon this country and that the showers of fertility, and seconding every fall of rain with a due proportion of sunshine. I had yet only the will to

do good, and did not imagine that I should ever have the power.

“ ‘One day, as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt in my mind a sudden wish that I could send rain on the southern mountains, and raise the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination I commanded rain to fall; and, by comparing the time of my command with that of the inundation, I found that the clouds had listened to my lips.’

“ ‘Might not some other cause,’ said I, ‘produce this concurrence? the Nile does not always rise on the same day.’

“ ‘Do not believe,’ said he with impatience, ‘that such objections could escape me: I reasoned long against my own conviction, and labored against truth with the utmost obstinacy. I sometimes suspected myself of madness, and should not have dared to impart this secret but to a man like you, capable of distinguishing the wonderful from the impossible, and the incredible from the false.’

“ ‘Why, sir,’ said I, ‘do you call that incredible which you know, or think you know, to be true?’”

“ ‘Because,’ said he, ‘I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know too well the laws of demonstration to think that my conviction ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conscious of its force. I therefore shall not attempt to gain credit by disputation. It is sufficient that I feel this power, that I have long possessed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is short, the infirm-

ities of age increase upon me, and the time will soon come when the regulator of the year must mingle with the dust. The care of appointing a successor has long disturbed me ; the night and the day have been spent in comparisons of all characters which have come to my knowledge, and I have yet found none so worthy as thyself.' ”

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE ASTRONOMER LEAVES IMLAC HIS DIRECTIONS.

“HEAR, therefore, what I shall impart with attention, such as the welfare of a world requires. If the task of a king be considered as difficult, who has the care only of a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm, what must be the anxiety of him, on whom depends the action of the elements, and the great gifts of light and heat?—Hear me, therefore, with attention.

“I have diligently considered the position of the earth and sun, and formed innumerable schemes in which I changed their situation. I have sometimes turned aside the axis of the earth, and sometimes varied the ecliptic of the sun: but I have found it impossible to make a disposition by which the world may be advantaged; what one region gains another loses by an imaginable alteration, even without considering the distant parts of the solar system with which we are acquainted. Do not, therefore, in thy administration of the year, indulge thy pride by innovation; do not please thyself with thinking that thou canst make thyself renowned to all future ages, by disordering the seasons. The memory of mischief is no desirable fame. Much less will it become

thee to let kindness or interest prevail. Never rob other countries of rain to pour it on thine own. For us the Nile is sufficient.'

"I promised, that when I possessed the power, I would use it with inflexible integrity; and he dismissed me, pressing my hand. 'My heart,' said he, 'will be now at rest, and my benevolence will no more destroy my quiet; I have found a man of wisdom and virtue, to whom I can cheerfully bequeath the inheritance of the sun.'"

The prince heard this narration with very serious regard; but the princess smiled, and Pekuah convulsed herself with laughter. "Ladies," said Imlac, "to mock the heaviest of human afflictions is neither charitable nor wise. Few can attain this man's knowledge and few practice his virtues; but all may suffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason."

The princess was recollected, and the favorite was abashed. Rasselas, more deeply affected, inquired of Imlac, whether he thought such maladies of the mind frequent, and how they were contracted?

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE DANGEROUS PREVALENCE OF IMAGINATION.

“DISORDERS of intellect,” answered Imlac, “happen much more often than superficial observers will easily believe. Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state. There is no man whose imagination does not sometimes predominate over his reason, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whose ideas will come and go at his command. No man will be found in whose mind airy notions do not sometimes tyrannize, and force him to hope or fear beyond the limits of sober probability. All power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity ; but while this power is such as we can control and repress, it is not visible to others, nor considered as any depravation of the mental faculties : It is not pronounced madness but when it becomes ungovernable, and apparently influences speech or action.

“To indulge the power of fiction, and send imagination out upon the wing, is often the sport of those who delight too much in silent speculation. When we are alone we are not always busy ; the labor of excogitation is too violent to last long ; the ardor of inquiry will sometimes give way to idleness or satiety. He who has nothing external that can

divert him must find pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is? He then expatiates in boundless futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the present moment he should most desire, amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combination, and riots in delights which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot bestow.

“In time some particular train of ideas fixes the attention; all other intellectual gratifications are rejected; the mind, in weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favorite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotic. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

“This, sir, is one of the dangers of solitude, which the hermit has confessed not always to promote goodness, and the astronomer’s misery has proved to be not always propitious to wisdom.”

“I will no more,” said the favorite, “imagine myself the queen of Abyssinia. I have often spent the hours, which the princess gave to my own disposal, in adjusting ceremonies and regulating the court; I have repressed the pride of the powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces

in more happy situations, planted groves upon the tops of mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty, till, when the princess entered, I had almost forgotten to bow down before her."

"And I," said the princess, "will not allow myself any more to play the shepherdess in my waking dreams. I have often soothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of pastoral employments, till I have, in my chamber, heard the winds whistle and the sheep bleat: sometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and sometimes with my crook encountered the wolf. I have a dress like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination, and a pipe, on which I play softly, and suppose myself followed by my flocks."

"I will confess," said the prince, "an indulgence of fantastic delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavored to imagine the possibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong should be restrained, all vice reformed, and all the subjects preserved in tranquillity and innocence. This thought produced innumerable schemes of reformation, and dictated many useful regulations and salutary edicts. This has been the sport, and sometimes the labor, of my solitude; and I start, when I think with how little anguish I once supposed the death of my father and my brothers."

"Such," says Imlac, "are the effect of visionary schemes. When we first form them we know them to be absurd, but familiarize them by degrees, and in time lose sight of their folly."

CHAPTER XLV.

THEY DISCOURSE WITH AN OLD MAN.

THE evening was now far passed, and they rose to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they saw at a small distance an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the assembly of the sages. "Yonder," said he, "is one whose years have calmed his passions, but not clouded his reason: let us close the disquisitions of the night by inquiring what are his sentiments of his own state, that we may know whether youth alone is to struggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life."

Here the sage approached and saluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled a while, as acquaintances that had unexpectedly met one another. The old man was cheerful and talkative, and the way seemed short in his company. He was pleased to find himself not disregarded, accompanied them to their house, and, at the prince's request, entered with them. They placed him in the seat of honor, and set wine and conserves before him.

"Sir," said the princess, "an evening walk must give to a man of learning, like you, pleasures which

ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and the causes of all that you behold, the law by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Everything must supply you with contemplation, and renew the consciousness of your own dignity."

"Lady," answered he, "let the gay and the vigorous expect pleasure in their excursions; it is enough that age can obtain ease. To me the world has lost its novelty: I look round and see what I remember to have seen in happier days. I rest against a tree, and consider that in the same shade I once disputed upon the annual overflow of the Nile with a friend who is now silent in the grave. I cast my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think with pain on the vicissitudes of life. I have ceased to take much delight in physical truth; for what have I to do with those things which I am soon to leave?"

"You may at least recreate yourself," said Imlac, "with the recollection of an honorable and useful life, and enjoy the praise which all agree to give you."

"Praise," said the sage, with a sigh, "is to an old man an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honors of her husband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals. Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my interest beyond myself. Youth is delighted with applause, because it is considered as the earnest of some future good, and because the prospect of life is far extended:

but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is little to be feared from the malevolence of men, and yet less to be hoped from their affection or esteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be useless, and high employment would be pain. My retrospect of life recalls to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much time squandered upon trifles, and more lost in idleness and vacancy. I leave many great designs unattempted, and many great attempts unfinished. My mind is burdened with no heavy crime, and therefore I compose myself to tranquillity; endeavor to abstract my thoughts from hopes and cares, which, though reason knows them to be vain, still try to keep their old possession of the heart; expect, with serene humility, that hour which nature cannot long delay; and hope to possess, in a better state, that happiness which here I could not find, and that virtue which here I have not attained."

He rose and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince consoled himself with remarking, that it was not reasonable to be disappointed by this account; for age had never been considered as the season of felicity; and if it was possible to be easy in decline and weakness, it was likely that the days of vigor and alacrity might be happy: that the noon of life could be bright if the evening could be calm.

The princess suspected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repress the expectations of

those who had newly entered the world. She had seen the possessors of estates look with envy on their heirs, and known many who enjoyed pleasure no longer than they could confine it to themselves.

Pekuah conjectured that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his complaints to delirious dejection; or else supposed that he had been unfortunate, and was therefore discontented; "For nothing," said she, "is more common than to call our own condition the condition of life."

Imlac, who had no desire to see them depressed, smiled at the comforts which they could so readily procure to themselves, and remembered, that at the same age he was equally confident of unmingled prosperity, and equally fertile of consolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itself would too soon impress. The princess and her lady retired; the madness of the astronomer hung upon their minds, and they desired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning the rising of the sun.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PRINCESS AND PEKUAH VISIT THE ASTRONOMER.

THE princess and Pekuah, having talked in private of Imlac's astronomer, thought his character at once so amiable and so strange that they could not be satisfied with a nearer knowledge; and Imlac was requested to find the means of bringing them together.

This was somewhat difficult, the philosopher had never received any visits from women, though he lived in a city that had in it many Europeans, who followed the manners of their own countries, and many from other parts of the world, that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refused, and several schemes were proposed for the accomplishment of their design. It was proposed to introduce them as strangers in distress, to whom the sage was always accessible; but, after some deliberation, it appeared that by this artifice no acquaintance could be formed, for their conversation would be short, and they could not decently importune him often. "This," said Rasselas, "is true; but I have yet a stronger objection against misrepresentation of your state. I have always considered it

as treason against the great republic of human nature to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him, whether on great or little occasions. All imposture weakens confidence and chills benevolence. When the sage finds that you are not what you seemed, he will feel the resentment nature to a man who, conscious of great abilities, discovers that he has been tricked by understandings meaner than his own; and, perhaps, the distrust, which he can never afterwards wholly lay aside, may stop the voice of counsel and close the hand of charity; and where will you find the power of restoring his benefactions to mankind or his peace to himself?"

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curiosity would subside, but, next day, Pekuah told him, she had now found an honest pretence for a visit to the astronomer, for she would solicit permission to continue under him the studies in which she had been initiated by the Arab, and the princess might go with her either as a fellow student, or because a woman could not decently come alone. "I am afraid," said Imlac, "that he will be soon weary of your company; men advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art, and I am not certain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them connected with inferences and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditress,"

"That," said Pekuah, "must be my care; I ask of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it; and, by concurring

always with his opinions, I shall make him think it greater than it is."

The astronomer, in pursuance of this resolution, was told that a foreign lady, travelling in search of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was desirous to become his scholar. The uncommonness of the proposal raised at once his surprise and curiosity: and when, after a short deliberation, he consented to admit her, he could not stay without impatience till the next day.

The ladies dressed themselves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the astronomer, who was pleased to see himself approached with respect by persons of so splendid an appearance. In the exchange of the first civilities he was timorous and bashful; but when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and justified the character which Imlac had given. Inquiring of Pekuah, what could have turned her inclination towards astronomy? he received from her a history of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time passed in the Arab's island. She told her tale with ease and elegance, and her conversation took possession of his heart. The discourse was then turned to astronomy; Pekuah displayed what she knew; he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and entreated her not to desist from a study which she had so happily begun.

They came again and again, and were every time more welcome than before. The sage endeavored to amuse them, that they might prolong their visits,

for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company ; the clouds of solicitude vanished by degrees, as he forced himself to entertain them ; and he grieved when he was left at their departure to his old employment of regulating the seasons.

The princess and her favorite had now watched his lips for several months, and could not catch a single word from which they could judge whether he continued, or not, in the opinion of his preternatural commission. They often contrived to bring him to an open declaration : but he easily eluded all their attacks, and on which side soever they pressed him escaped from them to some other topic.

As their familiarity increased, they invited him often to the house of Imlac, where they distinguished him by extraordinary respect. He began gradually to delight in sublunary pleasures. He came early, and departed late ; labored to recommend himself by assiduity and compliance ; excited their curiosity after new arts, that they might still want his assistance ; and when they made any excursion of pleasure or inquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wisdom, the prince and his sister were convinced that he might be trusted without danger ; and, lest he should draw any false hopes from the civilities which he received, discovered to him their condition, with the motives of their journey ; and required his opinion on the choice of life.

“Of the various conditions which the world spreads before you, which you shall prefer,” said the

sage, "I am not able to instruct you. I can only tell that I have chosen wrong. I have passed my time in study without experience; in the attainment of sciences which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expense of all the common comforts of life; I have missed the endearing elegance of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestic tenderness. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other students, they have been accompanied with fear, disquiet, and scrupulosity: but even of these prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, since my thoughts have been diversified by more intercourse with the world, begun to question the reality. When I have been for a few days lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in error, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain."

Imlac was delighted to find that the sage's understanding was breaking through its mists, and resolved to detain him from the planets till he should forget his task of ruling them, and reason should recover its original influence.

From this time the astronomer was received into familiar friendship, and partook of all their projects and pleasures: his respect kept him attentive, and the activity of Rasselas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always to be done; the day was spent in making observations, which furnished talk for the evening, and the evening was closed with a scheme for the morrow.

The sage confessed to Imlac, that since he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his authority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found subject to variation, from causes in which reason had no part. "If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours," said he, "my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence ; but they are soon disentangled by the prince's conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark ; yet, if his lamp be extinguished, feels again the terrors which he knows that when it is light he shall feel no more. But I am sometimes afraid lest I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am intrusted. If I favor myself in a known error, or am determined by my own ease in a doubtful question of this importance, how dreadful is my crime !"

"No disease of the imagination," answered Imlac, "is so difficult of cure as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt : fancy and conscience then act interchangeably upon us, and so often shift their places that the illusions of one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other. If fancy presents images not moral or religious, the mind

drives them away when they give it pain ; but when melancholic notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without opposition, because we are afraid to exclude or banish them. For this reason the superstitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almost always superstitious.

“But do not let the suggestions of timidity overpower your better reason : the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation, which when you consider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day less. Open your heart to the influence of the light which from time to time, breaks in upon you : when scruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not stand to parley, but fly to business or to Pekuah, and keep this thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the mass of humanity, and have neither such virtue nor vice as that you should be singled out for supernatural favors or afflictions.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PRINCE ENTERS, AND BRINGS A NEW TOPIC.

“ALL this,” said the astronomer, “I have often thought, but my reason has been so long subjugated by an uncontrollable and overwhelming idea that it durst not confide in its own decisions. I now see how fatally I betray my quiet, by suffering chimeras to prey upon me in secret; but melancholy shrinks from communication, and I never found a man before to whom I could impart my troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own sentiments confirmed by yours, who are not easily deceived, and can have no motive or purpose to deceive. I hope that time and variety will dissipate the gloom that has so long surrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be spent in peace.”

“Your learning and virtue,” said Imlac, “may justly give you hopes.”

Rasselas then entered with the princess and Pekuah, and inquired whether they had contrived any new diversion for the next day? “Such,” said Nekayah, “is the state of life, that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itself is nothing; when we have made it, the next wish is to change again. The world is not yet exhausted; let

me see something to-morrow which I never saw before."

"Variety," said Rasselas, is so necessary to content, that even the happy valley disgusted me by the recurrence of its luxuries ; yet I could not forbear to reproach myself with impatience when I saw the monks of St. Anthony support, without complaint, a life, not of uniform delight, but uniform hardship."

"Those men," answered Imlac, "are less wretched in their silent convent than the Abyssinian princes in their prison of pleasure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reasonable motive. Their labor supplies them with necessaries ; it therefore cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded. Their devotion prepares them for another state, and reminds them of its approach while it fits them for it. Their time is regularly distributed : one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of listless inactivity. There is a certain task to be performed at an appropriated hour ; and their toils are cheerful because they consider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endless felicity."

"Do you think," said Nekayah, "that the monastic rule is a more holy and less imperfect state than any other? May not he equally hope for future happiness who converses openly with mankind, who succors the distressed by his charity, instructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes by his industry to the general system of life ; even though he

should omit some of the mortifications which are practised in the cloister, and allow himself such harmless delights as his condition may place within his reach?"

"This," said Imlac, "is a question which has long divided the wise and perplexed the good. I am afraid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monastery. But, perhaps, every one is not able to stem the temptations of public life; and if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have likewise little strength to resist evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adversity, and are willing to eject those passions which have long busied them in vain. And many are dismissed by age and diseases from the more laborious duties of society. In monasteries the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not purpose to close his life in pious abstraction with a few associates serious as himself."

"Such," said Pekuah, "has often been my wish, and I have heard the princess declare, that she should not willingly die in a crowd."

"The liberty of using harmless pleasure," proceeded Imlac, "will not be disputed; but it is still to be examined what pleasures are harmless. The evil of any pleasure that Nekayah can imagine is not

in the act itself, but in its consequences. Pleasure, in itself harmless, may become mischievous by endearing us to a state which we know to be transient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itself, nor has any other use but that it disengages us from allurements of sense. In the state of future perfection, to which we all aspire, there will be pleasure without danger, and security without restraint."

The princess was silent, and Rasselas, turning to the astronomer, asked him "whether he could not delay her retreat by showing her something which she had not seen before?"

"Your curiosity," said the sage, "has been so general, and your pursuit of knowledge so vigorous, that novelties are not now very easily to be found; but what you can no longer procure from the living may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the Catacombs, or the ancient repositories in which the bodies of the earliest generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "what pleasure the sight of the Catacombs can afford; but, since nothing else is offered, I am resolved to view them, and shall place this with many other things which I have done because I would do something."

They hired a guard of horsemen, and the next day

visited the Catacombs. When they were about to descend into the sepulchral caves, "Pekuah," said the princess, "we are now again invading the habitations of the dead ; I know that you will stay behind ; let me find you safe when I return."—"No ; I will not be left," answered Pekuah, "I will go down between you and the prince."

"They then all descended, and roved with wonder through the labyrinth of subterraneous passages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either side.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

IMLAC DISCOURSES ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL.

“WHAT reason,” said the prince, “can be given why the Egyptians should thus expensively preserve those carcasses which some nations consume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their sight as soon as decent rites can be performed?”

“The original ancient custom,” said Imlac, “is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cause has ceased; and concerning superstitious ceremonies it is vain to conjecture; for what reason did not dictate, reason cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming arose only from tenderness to the remains of relations or friends, and to this opinion I am more inclined because it seems impossible that this care should have been general; had all the dead been embalmed, their repositories must in time have been more spacious than the dwellings of the living. I suppose only the rich or honorable were secured from corruption, and the rest left to the course of nature.

“But it is commonly supposed that the Egyptians believed the soul to live as long as the body con-

tinued undissolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death."

"Could the wise Egyptians," said Nekayah, "think so grossly of the soul? If the soul could once survive its separation, what could it afterwards receive or suffer from the body?"

"The Egyptians would doubtless think erroneously," said the astronomer, "in the darkness of heathenism, and the first dawn of philosophy. The nature of the soul is still disputed amidst all our opportunities of clearer knowledge: some yet say that it may be material, who nevertheless believe it to be immortal."

"Some," answered Imlac, "have indeed said that the soul is material, but I can scarcely believe that any man has thought it, who knew how to think; for all the conclusions of reason enforce the immateriality of mind, and all the notices of sense and investigations of science concur to prove the unconsciousness of matter.

"It was never supposed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we suppose to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, density, bulk, motion, and direction of motion: to which of these, however varied or combined, can consciousness be annexed? To be round or square, to be solid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved slowly or swiftly one way or another, are modes of material existence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If

matter be once without thought, it can only be made to think by some new modification, but all the modifications which it can admit are equally unconnected with cogitative powers."

"But the materialists," said the astronomer, "urge that matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted."

"He who will determine," returned Imlac, "against that which he knows, because there may be something which he knows not; he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings. All that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, senseless, and lifeless; and if this conviction cannot be opposed but by referring us to something that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be overruled by that which is unknown, no being, not omniscient, can arrive at certainty."

"Yet let us not," said the astronomer, too arrogantly limit the Creator's power."

"It is no limitation of omnipotence," replied the poet, "to suppose that one thing is not consistent with another, that the same proposition cannot be at once true and false, that the same number cannot be even and odd, that cogitation cannot be conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation."

"I know not," said Nekayah, "any great use of this question. Does that immateriality, which, in my opinion, you have sufficiently proved, necessarily include eternal duration?"

"Of immateriality," said Imlac, "our ideas are negative, and therefore obscure. Immateriality seems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration as a consequence of exemption from all causes of decay : whatever perishes is destroyed by the solution of its contexture, and separation of its parts ; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and therefore admits no solution, can be naturally corrupted or impaired."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "how to conceive anything without extension ; what is extended must have parts, and you allow that whatever has parts may be destroyed."

"Consider your own conceptions," replied Imlac, "and the difficulty will be less. You will find substance without extension. An ideal form is no less real than material bulk : yet an ideal form has no extension. It is no less certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind possesses the idea of a pyramid than that the pyramid itself is standing. What space does the idea of a pyramid occupy more than the idea of a grain of corn ? or how can either idea suffer laceration ? As is the effect, such is the cause : as thought, such is the power that thinks : a power impassive and indiscerptible."

"But the Being," said Nekayah, "whom I fear to name, the Being which made the soul, can destroy it."

"He surely can destroy it," answered Imlac, "since, however unperishable, it receives from a superior nature its power of duration. That it will not

perish by any inherent cause of decay, or principle of corruption, may be shown by philosophy ; but philosophy can tell no more. That it will not be annihilated by him that made it, we must humbly learn from higher authority." The whole assembly stood a while silent and collected. "Let us return," said Rasselas, from this scene of mortality. How gloomy would be these mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he should never die, that what now acts shall continue its agency, and what now thinks shall think on forever. Those that lie here stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state : they were, perhaps, snatched away while they were busy like us in the choice of life."

"To me," said the princess, "the choice of life is become less important ; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity."

They then hastened out of the caverns and under the protection of their guard returned to Cairo.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH NOTHING IS
CONCLUDED.

It was now the time of the inundation of the Nile : a few days after their visit to the Catacombs the river began to rise.

They were confined to their house. The whole region being under water gave them no invitation to any excursions, and being well supplied with materials for talk, they diverted themselves with comparisons of the different forms of life which they had observed, and with various schemes of happiness which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never so much charmed with any place as the convent of St. Anthony, where the Arab restored her to the princess, and wished only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioress of the order ; she was weary of expectation and disgust, and would gladly be fixed in some unvariable state.

The princess thought, that of all sublunary things knowledge was the best : she desired first to learn all sciences, and then proposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition

and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age, models of prudence and patterns of piety.

The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of government with his own eyes; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life, without directing their course to any particular port.

Of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated a while what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abyssinia.

THE END.

A. L. Burt's Catalogue of Books for Young People by Popular Writers, 52- 58 Duane Street, New York ❧ ❧ ❧

BOOKS FOR GIRLS.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. By LEWIS CARROLL.

12mo, cloth, 42 illustrations, price 75 cents.

"From first to last, almost without exception, this story is delightfully droll, humorous and illustrated in harmony with the story."—New York Express.

Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found.

There. By LEWIS CARROLL. 12mo, cloth, 50 illustrations, price 75 cents.

"A delight alike to the young people and their elders, extremely funny both in text and illustrations."—Boston Express.

Little Lucy's Wonderful Globe. By CHARLOTTE M.

YONGE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price 75 cents.

"This story is unique among tales intended for children, alike for pleasant instruction, quaintness of humor, gentle pathos, and the subtlety with which lessons moral and otherwise are conveyed to children, and perhaps to their seniors as well."—The Spectator.

Joan's Adventures at the North Pole and Elsewhere.

By ALICE CORKRAN. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price 75 cents.

"Wonderful as the adventures of Joan are, it must be admitted that they are very naturally worked out and very plausibly presented. Altogether this is an excellent story for girls."—Saturday Review.

Count Up the Sunny Days: A Story for Girls and Boys.

By C. A. JONES. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price 75 cents.

"An unusually good children's story."—Glasgow Herald.

The Dove in the Eagle's Nest. By CHARLOTTE M.

YONGE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"Among all the modern writers we believe Miss Yonge first, not in genius, but in this, that she employs her great abilities for a high and noble purpose. We know of few modern writers whose works may be so safely commended as hers."—Cleveland Times.

Jan of the Windmill. A Story of the Plains. By Mrs.

J. H. EWING. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"Never has Mrs. Ewing published a more charming volume, and that is saying a very great deal. From the first to the last the book overflows with the strange knowledge of child-nature which so rarely survives childhood; and moreover, with inexhaustible quiet humor, which is never anything but innocent and well-bred, never priggish, and never clumsy."—Academy.

A Sweet Girl Graduate. By L. T. MEADE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"One of this popular author's best. The characters are well imagined and drawn. The story moves with plenty of spirit and the interest does not flag until the end too quickly comes."—Providence Journal.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publisher, A. L. BURT, 52-58 Duane Street, New York.

BOOKS FOR GIRLS.

Six to Sixteen: A Story for Girls. By JULIANA

HORATIA EWING. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"There is no doubt as to the good quality and attractiveness of 'Six to Sixteen.' The book is one which would enrich any girl's book shelf."—*St. James' Gazette*.

The Palace Beautiful: A Story for Girls. By L. T.

MEADE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"A bright and interesting story. The many admirers of Mrs. L. T. Meade in this country will be delighted with the 'Palace Beautiful' for more reasons than one. It is a charming book for girls."—*New York Recorder*.

A World of Girls: The Story of a School. By L. T.

MEADE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"One of those wholesome stories which it does one good to read. It will afford pure delight to numerous readers. This book should be on every girl's book shelf."—*Boston Home Journal*.

The Lady of the Forest: A Story for Girls. By L. T.

MEADE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"This story is written in the author's well-known, fresh and easy style. All girls fond of reading will be charmed by this well-written story. It is told with the author's customary grace and spirit."—*Boston Times*.

At the Back of the North Wind. By GEORGE MAC-

DONALD. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"A very pretty story, with much of the freshness and vigor of Mr. MacDonald's earlier work. . . . It is a sweet, earnest, and wholesome fairy story, and the quaint native humor is delightful. A most delightful volume for young readers."—*Philadelphia Times*.

The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby.

By CHARLES KINGSLEY. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"The strength of his work, as well as its peculiar charms, consist in his description of the experiences of a youth with life under water in the luxuriant wealth of which he revels with all the ardor of a poetical nature."—*New York Tribune*.

Our Bessie. By ROSA N. CAREY. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"One of the most entertaining stories of the season, full of vigorous action, and strong in character-painting. Elder girls will be charmed with it, and adults may read its pages with profit."—*The Teachers' Aid*.

Wild Kitty. A Story of Middleton School. By L. T.

MEADE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"Kitty is a true heroine—warm-hearted, self-sacrificing, and, as all good women nowadays are, largely touched with the enthusiasm of humanity. One of the most attractive gift books of the season."—*The Academy*.

A Young Mutineer. A Story for Girls. By L. T.

MEADE. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, price \$1.00.

"One of Mrs. Meade's charming books for girls, narrated in that simple and picturesque style which marks the authoress as one of the first among writers for young people."—*The Spectator*.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publisher, A. L. BURT, 52-58 Duane Street, New York.

